

# TELEVISIONS

VOL. 4

NO.2

## FEATURES

4

### VT ON TV

Five years after the video ideology proclaimed that "VT is not TV," broadcasters and freelance videomakers have reached a technological middle ground. Over 400 stations now own Electronic News Gathering hardware, and a dozen independent producers have broadcasted their own programs made on similar equipment.

This *TELEVISIONS* report examines the technical, historical, political, economic, aesthetic and journalistic issues raised by the acceptance of small format video for broadcast use, both inside and outside the industry.

### QUESTION

Are the industry and independent uses of small format video competitive or compatible? *TELEVISIONS* asks ten people working in TV and VT in exclusive interviews.

### TIME SCAN

Scan the brief history of small format video's emergence on America's home TV screens — a comprehensive chronology of technical and programming milestones.

### TELEVISION'S ALL ELECTRONIC FUTURE

TV's future is all-electronic, and we tell you why and how the decisions were reached — as well as an assessment of the role that independent videomakers should (or shouldn't) play in the future.

### 10 SITCOMS

Reliving our sitcom history in this humorous look at the golden egg from the Golden Age of TV and today's quite different offspring.

### 11 HARDWARE

Every year the video manufacturers pick one show for their big extravaganza—and this year all the action was at the NAB show, with new ENG hardware and mini-cams in center stage. Here's a look at the marketplace, without the usual gee-whiz.

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Half-inch black-and-white productions by independents appear on LA and Chicago stations. "VTR" showcases video for a second year, expanding to the Eastern Educational Network.

### 18 REGULATION

Copyright revision will spell changes for artists, broadcasters, and CATV operators. Compulsory license threatens artists, scares broadcasters, and guarantees cable a royalty rate that will protect its profits.

New ground rules for the use of the radio spectrum will be set at the 1979 World Administrative Radio Conference. The politics are intricate, and policy preparations in the U.S. are crucial to every party interested in broadcasting.

### 19 CABLE TV

New York City's second borough to be franchised for cable is the seat of some pretty hot controversy, though not as well-publicized as Manhattan Cable's Channel J leased channel — former home of *Midnight Blue* softcore porn.

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### NEWS FROM THE VIDEOSPHERE

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The case for developing alternative stations, not alternative programs. Using radio as a model and real-time as a goal.

The first strike against a TV network since the advent of ENG is settled — what can we learn?

Videomakers as workers. What kind of organization serves what kind of interests? A critical question for the video movement and the TV industry.

### 24 LIBRARIES

Cataloging and the Library of Congress: will video get into mainstream library use? The issue is of interest to everyone who wants to see wider distribution of videotapes.

### 26 EDUCATION

Racism ratings in federally funded children's TV. A look at HEW's \$50 million spent on programs like *Gettin' Over*, *Sesame Street*, and *Infinity Factory*. The Mielke/Indiana report and the role of PBS. How Emergency School Aid Act TV works, including an interview with its chief, Dave Berkman. Following through the questions of minority hiring: competence, content, and control.

### 27 SOCIAL SERVICES

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### 29 VIDEOART

Video performances in San Francisco are up to the state of the art. T.R. Uth Co. has welded itself to the outside wall of the La Mamele Gallery, and Darryl Sapien Michael Hinton assembled a double helix model thirty seven feet through a hole in the ceiling of the San Francisco Museum.

## FEEDBACK

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NAB goes down fighting. In Poland filmmakers read *TELEVISIONS*. A call for a Philo Farnsworth day to celebrate the real inventor of TV. And, art in Philadelphia.

POV is a new column in which a member of the Network speaks her or his piece. John Hunt's weekly video expos in Venice, CA, are a focus of producers and a hotbed of TV critical thinking.

## 526TH LINE

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The cathode ray tube scans 525 lines. Our extra scanline looks beyond the immediate picture.

## RESOURCES

### 30 PRINT

A review of *Envelopes of Sound*, an oral history of oral history, featuring Studs Terkel. Documentarians, and news producers have a lot to learn from the historians, anthropologists, and other academic professionals who have introduced audio and video recording into their work.

The *Video Art* book is finally out, anthologizing every tendency, letting the artists speak for themselves. Institutions are described; and, in separate chapters, curators and art historians outline the state of the art.

## SURVIVAL

Potomac Fever Strikes: new changes, new panels, new director at the National Endowment for the Arts' Public Media Program.

## CALENDAR

Workshops in July and August from Rochester to San Francisco, covering documentary production, dance video, and library uses. Festivals in Portland and Woodstock, and the Flaherty Seminar in NYC.

# FEEDBACK

## TELEVISIONS In Poland

We want to ask you kindly for a possibility of sending us your interesting *TeleVISIONS*, not yet known here and searched by us.

You can be naturally sure that all these current, back, and future issues will be here for all our Club of many passionate film animators and film researchers not only an excellent reference material and the great help for our lectures and discussions.

Besides, would be naturally this your interesting organ mentioned already in the Bulletin for Film and Video Information and specially recommended in its special circulatory of Dec. 1, 1975. Our forthcoming Exhibition of various publications on film and video making will be the best way to popularize your active and dynamic Editors' Office and your worthwhile organ in our country, among the Polish film animators, film researchers and enthusiasts.

Being naturally interested very much in all future issues of *TeleVISIONs* we could send you with pleasure in return some most attractive and most interesting Polish film or TV magazines, issued here and being unable to send out money abroad from here to subscribe.

**Film Club, FAFIK**  
P.O. Box 10  
43-308 Bielsko-Biala 8  
Poland

## 'Free TV' Replies

With reference to your discussion (January/February issue) of the recently-released study by the staff of the House Subcommittee on Communications, I have a few comments. First, it is, of course, strictly a staff report, not a report of the subcommittee.

Second, you state that the report calls for a Rural Telecommunications Act authorizing low-cost loans "for the construction of cable systems in low-density areas" (emphasis added), when in fact the report proposes such loans for the installation of translators as well as cable. This is in line with the recommendations of the Denver Research Institute for the Office of Telecommunications Policy. DRI said: "No other alternative (than translators) can deliver signals as inexpensively over such a wide area." Such a rural program would involve many billions of dollars of taxpayer-subsidized loans. Proposals have been made in Congress for 15-year, 5% rural cable loans.

Third, the subcommittee staff report, in a footnote (p. 50), states that "public affairs" is carried by broadcasters "2.5 percent on prime time, or 7½ minutes a day" (emphasis added). This was interpreted by the *New York Times* to mean 7½ minutes during the entire broadcast day. It actually means 7½ minutes between 6:00 P.M. and 11:00 P.M. For the whole day, 4.1% or 44 minutes of programming is labelled "public affairs." It must also be noted that the definition of "public affairs" is very narrow. It is defined as a debate or discussion of

public issues. Thus it would exclude, for example, a bicentennial profile of the station's own community, or a job clearinghouse designed to assist job seekers in the community. Taken together, news, public affairs and other non-entertainment programming fill 21.8% of the 6:00 A.M. - Midnight broadcast day, or almost four hours, and such programming accounts for 16.5% of the 6:00 P.M. - 11:00 P.M. time period, or about 50 minutes.

Fourth, we are pleased that the staff report recognizes the dangers of siphoning ("Quite clearly, the public interest would be disserved if siphoning of some types of programs occurred.") and the threat that cable poses to the continued existence of small market television stations whose demise, the staff report says, would leave "the noncable television homes in the market unserved . . . It is a tenet of the Communications Act that all Americans, regardless of location, are entitled to a basic level of service."

Combatting entropy in our information system . . . Dreams of reader-written media sustain all our activity.

Fifth, the report does not deal with the question of how cable, and pay-cable, if it is to be the alternative to broadcasting, is going to reach those who can't afford it. For this reason, poor areas simply are not wired, as for instance Watts in Los Angeles, while wealthy Beverly Hills has cable.

Sixth, the subcommittee staff report does not consider the negative impact of its recommendations on the public broadcasting stations. This negative impact will be felt (in some instances, is already being felt) in two ways — first, public broadcasting stations are underwritten by the same people, the upper middle class, whose subscriptions would support pay-TV; second, importation of distant public broadcasting stations in competition with local public broadcasting stations dilutes the local station's audience and makes local fund-raising more difficult.

Finally, the report lists 143 "experts" with whom the subcommittee staff consulted. Not one single non-network radio

or television licensee was listed — though these broadcasters are most affected by this issue.

**Robert Resor**  
**Office For Free Television**  
**National Association of Broadcasters**

## Philadelphia Video

This fall, the Morris County Arts Council will offer a fourteen-week workshop in video basics. Visiting artists will be invited to show their tapes and discuss problems of technique and distribution with the class. Teachers who enroll will receive three in-service credits on completion of the course and, should interest be great enough, an option to take an advanced course during the winter of '77. Anyone interested in this project, either as participant or visiting artist, should contact John Downey, 284 Malapardis Rd., Morris Plains, N.J. 07950.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art has adapted video to give its patrons two more ways to experience the process of creation. Using a slightly enlarged touch-tone device, anyone can select a film-to-video loop and watch the counter on the device hunt for the program just as a jukebox hunts for a record. When the loop, say, *Picasso Is . . .*, is found, you just sit back and enjoy.

In another part of the museum, in an exhibit on The Family, a typical nuclear example may be seen having at each other on video running on a set in the middle of the exhibit. For more information, contact David Katzof at the Division of Education, 215-763-8100.

**John Downey**

## International TV Day

Would you folks be interested in helping to organize Sept. 7th as "International Television Day"? The event is designed to commemorate the world's first demonstration of "true television" on September 7, 1927. On this date Philo T. Farnsworth — the mystery man of television history — achieved the first totally electronic video transmission in San Francisco. The date represents a pivotal moment in the evolution of man, and as such deserves a permanent place in recorded history.

Our idea is to help video groups, TV stations, cable systems — anybody who feels indebted to the man who laid the foundation for this industry — to express their gratitude in one large public celebration on the anniversary of this historic event.

We are in a position to provide a great deal of background material to support this contention. We've investigated the patent records and interviewed the Farnsworth family extensively. We've uncovered a truly fascinating, untold piece of history.

**Paul W. Schatzkin**  
**Waterstar Productions**  
**6321 Weidlake Drive**  
**Hollywood, CA 90068**

## POINT OF VIEW

### Kicking Kodak

#### With a *vidiot no-pain* addiction

The first live TV I saw was a horse-soap called "Action in the Afternoon," coming out of Philly. They had an old western set, an Aaron Copland theme, the usual stuff, the town street, a saloon, a few interiors, horses, some bad scripts (stories lifted right out of Gene Autry and the rest of the gang). But suddenly I witnessed something new. The good guys and the bad guys were the same but the horses weren't — they actually shit! Right there in the street, steaming hot, something that never happened in the movies.

TV was never the same twice, just like life. Life had warts. TV could fall down the stairs, or a horse might shit on your boots. When the blanks misfired and the actors blew their cues I knew TV meant instant doom for Gene Autry and the other paper men who without the editor's shears couldn't maintain a smile for more than a minute in a whole year.

We've kicked the Kodak habit, but we've kicked it with a methadone-like no-pain addiction, replacing one drug with another. We've become a country of mainline vidiots, TV junkies.

Ken Nordine made it famous in the Fifties on a record called "Word Jazz", with a cut called "The Vidiot." The objective interviewer scorns his patient one minute for being hooked on Milton Berle — "who is this, some friend you watch TV with?" — and the next minute is hooked himself. Nordine knew then that no one was immune from the tube.

People are sick with TV now, that's what I think. When I started broadcasting school they were already sick. By 1961 Newton Minnow was just calling TV a vast wasteland. It was our big topic for months in classes. We all felt we were going to do something about that wasteland. We were conservationists: none of us thought any other way about it.

People are sick over TV, and if you ask them they'll tell you. Go ahead, don't take my media freak's word for it. Everyone will cop to it, if you lean a little. Sure,

the TV is on maybe 8 hours a day — but who's watching what?

Time-lapse studies of viewing habits are a revealing way to see at least the choreography of viewers at the tube: jerky, nervous, fragmented: like the medium they're "watching."

No one knows if viewer interest can be sustained because viewer interest isn't meant to be sustained in any intelligent manner. Social scientists and poets will say mordantly that TV merely reflects the chaotic conditions in our world, no more, no less. We have been broken into a million fragments that can go shooting off into a million spaces at any time. TV tells us this and sends us on our way without a tear.

If TV really stimulated us we'd need it less and less. If we could use channels for *information*, instead of "programs," if we could learn to read information instead of watching TV, we would become more specific about our demands on TV.

There's more than a touch of irony in a situation where we are so hungry for TV to give us more, we are so tuned into the immense power of TV as a tool in reorganizing this country, we are famished for content — and we are instead consumed by TV. We are the products of TV, everything is focused on us, the Great Public. Everything is done to squeeze every drop out of us. For every dollar the advertisers put in, they get 40 dollars back. Forty-to-one against us. That's bad odds, any way you cut it.

But just don't cut me out of the game yet, because as any dope knows, the players have a right to change the game at any time. And if I've given up on the movies, I'm optimistic about our chance to change TV, to take control of it someday. Or make the battle to take control so hot and furious that everyone will be in eyeshot of the action.

**John Hunt, videor at Environmental Communications in Venice, CA, has recently shown his "Portraits of Larry Bell" at the Santa Barbara Museum.**

# THE 526TH LINE

**Video adventurers:** Ant Farm (*Media Burn* and *The Eternal Frame*) is taking video to Australian aborigines whose dreams of magical green ants have moved them to reject millions of dollars for sacred land rich in uranium deposits . . . Juan Downey, celebrated for *Video Trans Americas*, his multiple screen portraits of South American life, is heading to the Amazon to tape cannibals. "Being eaten by your video subjects is the ultimate architectural experience." . . . Downtown Community TV Center, whose *Cuba The People* was a PBS network special that got 10% of the NYC audience, is returning in July to interview Fidel and hopes to bring back a picture of Cuba's prison system. . . . And, out of the heart of Chicago, the *It's A Living* crews have followed the direction of Studs Terkel to document the work lives of garbage collectors, rubber workers, railroad loaders, and mail-order warehousers. As Terkel says in his book of interviews with US workers, work is violence. And, the presentation of that violence has been excluded from American TV. See page 14.

**In a state of flux,** Manhattan Cable isn't ready to make a statement, but our sources tell us that the NYC system is cutting its public access budget drastically, formalizing its fee schedule for all equipment use, and putting the PA facil-

ty on a self-sustaining, sink-or-swim basis. How will this affect the quality of signal processing, and the updating of playback equipment? Is this the push away from citizen use to a bush league training ground for out-of-work Hollywood would-bes and has-beens?

**Sometime ago,** it's said (and we believe it) Henry Loomis, president of CPB, queried Al Zack, the AFL-CIO's advisor to public TV: "Al," he said, "Why are you people always complaining about our lack of controversial programming? Didn't we run *VD Blues*?" "Henry," Al replied, was there really someone who came out for *VD*?" Is public TV changing its tune? Larry Grossman, new PBS president, has made rosy promises for a new public affairs "presence" that will compete with commercial network news. A full slate of public affairs programming is planned for every Friday night, including an hour slot for independent documentaries.

**The National Endowment for the Arts** and the Ford Foundation have promised a quarter of a million each to set up a fund for independent production aimed at PBS. Compared by Fred Friendly to the Fund for Investigative Journalism, the money will be administered by a strong executive without any oversight by PBS or CPB staffers. The grantors called a June 11 meeting of two dozen repre-

The tube scans only 525 lines. The extra scan line presents our Point Of View on the state of communication arts, business, and public action.

sentatives of foundations, public TV, and independent producers along with assorted luminary documentarians for advice on a mechanism to distribute the money. The model we expect them to adopt is a variation on Barbara Schultz' *Visions* series operating out of KCET-TV in LA. Chloe Aaron, David Davis, and Friendly were adamant about the creative freedom of the project which they say will have no restrictions on content and be responsive to the most diverse interpretation of public affairs. Without setting any quotas or issuing any directives to the future administrators of the fund, the decision-makers assured the video boosters that video would not be slighted in favor of the more developed documentary film tradition.

**We are interested,** in a bemused sort of way, that CPB proudly publishes a Roper study commissioned to demonstrate that public TV reaches an audience cutting across class lines. However, we are confused that the Washington, D.C. station persists in distributing promotional material promising underwriters an audience of affluent shoppers. The leaflet, titled, "Good Business Should Be Seen And Heard" presents these arguments for advertising on public television: "Underwriting on WETA 26 reaches out to a prime market . . . 49% of WETA 26 viewing households are headed by college

graduates . . . 26% have incomes of \$25,000 or more, 61% have incomes of \$15,000 or more." Meanwhile, the research director at WNET, public TV in NYC, published an analysis in *Public Telecommunications Review* rejecting the Roper findings, and the interpretation by CPB: "The only correct conclusion to be drawn from these data is that a disproportionate share of PTV viewers is from the higher educational and income levels, and from the white collar, executive/professional occupations."

**Are TV networks born** around a conference table with coffee and chit-chat? Perhaps, so. A proposed "Community Television Network" was the subject of a series of meetings this spring attracting representatives from a number of major labor unions, consumer groups, and lobbies like the National League of Cities, Consumer Federation of America. Using cable and satellite interconnection, the network would seek to develop a new national programming schedule outside the existing nets and pay-TV structure. The idea is in feasibility study/funding stage. Washington cable entrepreneur Art Barber is spearheading it.

**The New York** State Legislature ruled that the television set is a legal necessity and can not be removed with other goods by creditors collecting a bad debt.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

The Hollywood film technician picks up *TELEVISIONS* wondering if he can find a clue to the future of his union's 70% unemployment rate. He's also interested in health information via video: he's never understood his high blood pressure.

In our last issue, we ran an article by Ed Lowe on the use of video in working with parents who have problems with their kids. Ed has been doing this work for several years and the article is filled with concrete details that are of interest to other video users in related social science, health and education fields. But it is also an article of interest to all parents or anyone looking forward someday to being a parent.

What we want to capture in the magazine is this dual interest. Our initial audience is made up almost entirely of people who are involved in some sort of media work. And, we know, for example, that Bonnie Taylor, making information and training tapes at UCLA's Neuropsychiatric Institute, is interested in the latest techniques and equipment in other fields that relate to her own production, that the newsletters and conferences within her field do not keep her in touch with art, education, libraries, cable-access activities, or the broadcast refinements of her ENG hardware.

Keeping Bonnie in mind, we know that as a media-sensitized person she is interested in a lot of stories that do not relate directly to her bread and butter. This makes us think. After all, her interest in the distribution of Mary Hartman, or a report on the programming structure of PBS, or the federal investment in children's television are interests that in many cases are expressed by TV consumers. *TV Guide* is aware of this interest, publishing 20 million copies a week, always with a story whose headline could feature in *TELEVISIONS*.

We are committed to this dual role of consumers and producers. It is visible in our reliance on the Network and reader input. But more importantly this posture underlies our belief that we have a substantial audience for general information in more than a dozen highly specialized professional areas.

We have carried with us for many years the expectation that the media-wise consumer would mushroom out of the new technologies — cable, disc, satellite — through which video would penetrate even deeper into our lives. On the careful side, we remember Brecht's call for listener-created radio in 1926. And, we keep in mind that abstractly glorifying the potentials of this or that technology has been part and parcel of undermining their use in the public interest. On the other hand, a popular interest in participation is demonstrated everyday, not only by the *TV Guide* articles, but by the titillations of preprogrammed spontaneity in talk and game shows.

In our recent video production about TV viewing habits and opinions which involved a series of visits with a three-generation working class family, we were struck by the ambivalence behind the ratings. That people watch does not indicate approval anymore than people's labor indicates satisfaction in their job or its products.

Not only the completed saturation of broadcast TV or the promise of new means of distribution, but the rising use of video itself heightens the behind-the-scenes-awareness of consumers. A&P is using video cassettes to retrain 85,000 employees. Are they an audience for this magazine? More and more, people are having experiences with video that reveal TV as a tool within their reach.

**Larry Kirkman**

# TELE VISIONS

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# Small Format Video Broadcast

It was true back in 1970, the epigram that expressed the ideology of video: "VT is not TV".

Videotape was not television, and videomakers made a cause out of the differences.

Today 65% of American TV viewers see local news which is made on more sophisticated models of that early half inch black-and-white equipment. In the years since those first experiments, the distinctions have become blurred, particularly since many who proclaimed the VT/TV dichotomy are now peddling their programs to the networks and public TV. Broadcasters and at least some videomakers have met at a kind of technological middle ground.

How did this happen? What does it mean? Is it the death of the so-called video revolution, or was that an illusion in the first place? Does video as a production tool embody inherently different qualities, or do these values

stem more from the context in which the tools are used? Do broadcast TV's quest for mass audience and the interests of its advertisers dictate a style and content, regardless of the mode of production? Is the contradiction between unionized broadcast workers and independents reconcilable?

Such questions have emerged during the past year, the most fertile period for the development of small format video for both the industry and video independents. They will be answered as this story unfolds.

TeleVISIONS will provide news and perspective on future developments, but we felt an urgency to produce a ground-zero report, sketching the historical evolution of VT on TV, as well as a distillation of the major issues.

Our many hours of interviews with video freelancers, broadcast executives and technicians, union officials and interested observers have been summarized in these six pages. Space limitations have prevented us from giving full play to many we interviewed, although the *Time Scan* and *Future of TV* stories include most of this information.

The news pages in this issue also carry several related stories: Parry Teasdale's arms-length tour of the NAB hardware show (page 11), a look at videomakers as workers inside and outside the broadcast industry by Nick DeMartino (page 22) Andrea Sheen's report on the NABET strike settlement with NBC (page 21), as well as many news stories in the Broadcast TV (page 21) and Production (page 16) departments.

Many in the video community disagree strongly with the direction toward broadcast TV. While we share many of their reservations, we see the possibility and value of reaching mass audiences with new kinds of programming.

This report was planned and prepared by Victoria Costello, Nick DeMartino and Larry Kirkman (with help from Rebecca Moore, Gayle Gibbons and Maurice Jacobsen). All of us have been part of the tremendous upsurge in national activity on the VT/TV front.

Larry and Vicki's half-hour tape *TV Family* represents our first broadcast-quality production, so we have undergone every difficult stage in the production and marketing at the broadcast level.

TELEVISIONS is also a member of the Coalition for New Public Affairs Programming, which has focused on public TV's relationship to independents. Nick has served as coordinator for the Coalition, and has met with hundreds of broadcasters on the subject in the last four months.

These involvements, besides causing some delay in the production of this issue, have helped us create the kind of engaged journalism we think TELEVISIONS represents. We all know, however, that these are *our* interpretations, and that the dialogue will continue for some time. We welcome others to disagree, to respond, to share your insights into the future of broadcast programming.



# Question:

the TV industry at a time when many independent video producers are trying to break into broadcasting. Are these two trends mutually exclusive, and what do you think the result will be on our home TV sets in the next few years?

### Don Hewitt

Producer of CBS's *60 Minutes*

"We're trying hard not to get into ENG. The audio is terrible, you can't mix the tracks, and you can't edit it properly. Video is a tool, that's all it is. If something is good, it's good. I don't care where it comes from if it's got style, flair, wit, and is journalistically sound. We transfer film to videotape for our programs. If it's good quality I'm all for it. I felt the same about independent film makers. But I haven't seen anything yet that really knocked me out. Just because a person has a typewriter, doesn't make him a novelist. Similarly, just because a person has a video camera doesn't make him a filmmaker."

### Lorne Michaels

Producer of NBC's *Saturday Night*

"We shot our last show with the new RCA TK-76; it was dazzling. For us it opens up an entirely new world. The streets of New York are available to us now, without a cable. Small format will completely change news gathering. The reporter becomes his/her own cameraperson, they become the equipment instead of dealing with an intermediary. . . . Most people are completely mystified by the process, they have no sense of what is involved in the process . . . Small format will change all that."

### Sterling Davis

Chief Engineer, Metrotape West,  
Production for Norman Lear

"I see no conflict between ENG use of video-cassette and independent production uses. Cassettes are marginal but acceptable to 70% of broadcasters for certain things like promos, public service announcements, news. The big stations with a lot invested in high level equipment won't use cassettes much, except for news, but the smaller stations will use them any place they can to save money. As for independent production using small format, how a production was made is not germane to a sales discussion in many cases. It's the content. If you are selling a program, you're selling it to just one person, the buyer at the station. More often than not, he won't care how you made it if he can see the program filling a need, creating an audience."

### Michael Shamborg

Top Value Television, Los Angeles

"That equipment in their hands has had an effect on style. It's altered their shooting ratios, allowed them to shoot more, to get more naturalistic stories, more real moments, more interesting stuff — I've seen it. They have the same options that we have. And there may be some cross-over. One of the big issues as I understand it is that NBC was really pushing for was to reduce the radius around the big cities where the network could buy independently produced video. This would provide the potential for people to become stringers for the network. But there is no compulsion by the networks to deal with independents. They will never initiate anything. It will take new categories, new ways of thinking about organization. Now that the technological barriers are down, it becomes an organizational question. And I think that it will come from people like ourselves — defining what we do in acceptable terms to them. 'We're not crazy. You can do business with us. We want to do business with you.'"

### Marshall Davidson

CBS News,

Vice-President/Operations

"We hope to be 100% video as soon as it is practically possible. Our utilization of video has progressed as the technology has improved. Currently one-third of the domestic news crews are equipped for video. We are using the Ikegami HL 35 camera coupled to the new BV series Sony broadcast  $\frac{3}{4}$ " portable deck. Raw footage is edited on a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " system and transferred onto a master 2" reel for transmission. If it is a fast breaking story, however, the  $\frac{3}{4}$ " edit is fed directly. The  $\frac{3}{4}$ " format is fairly well stabilized and will be the format for some time to come, but the development of color cameras is still in progress. Our next camera will be the new Thompson Microcam. CBS' goal is to equip all domestic crews for hard news coverage followed by foreign crews and eventually using video for news features and documentaries. Although CBS and the other networks use stringers and local affiliates to cover stories where it is logically difficult to send a network crew, video will not make much difference in the percentage of utilization of such outside sources."

### Carol Brandenberg

Program Coordinator of WNET's VTR series

"The most important thing about using small format video is the intimacy, the fresh new perspective it provides. Following the airing of the Kleins' *A Portrait—54 Years* on VTR 2 we were flooded with letters about how warm and interesting the show was. Independent video production on broadcast is no longer an experiment, it has been tried and it works, that's why we're getting into so many union questions. Now that the initial suspicions and euphoria about video are subsiding, artists who never thought about the distribution of their videoworks are thinking broadcast from the start. The union problems appear most with documentaries and public affairs programming, particularly when shooting takes place within (a 50 mile radius) New York City such as John Alpert's *Chinatown*. CPB provided production money and WNET gave post-production support, but officially the program was ACQUIRED. The cleanest arrangement for the station is to deal with independents' programming as acquisitions. I don't see the wider use of this arrangement causing confrontation with the unions. Any attempts to form a more concrete policy would cause a confrontation, which is not desirable. WNET has a proposal before the N.Y. State Arts Council for a series of independently produced video documentaries which would begin in December; all would be ACQUIRED works. The funding of documentary productions is more difficult than of videoart."

### Anda Korsts

Videopolis, Chicago

"I think the two are mutually exclusive. As soon as they master the minicam they are going to shut everyone else out. There isn't room for independent producers, in either commercial or public TV. The differences in our subject matter are going to be important to most stations. They'd rather not bother, and anyway, it's safer to do other things — the reporter standing in front of city hall. They are getting what they wanted from equipment — cheapness. As for independents, the ones who will make it are those who can become self-sustaining, and then sell their products, like TTV and a few others."

Small format is sweeping

the TV industry at a time when many independent video producers are trying to break into broadcasting. Are these two trends mutually exclusive, and what do you think the result will be on our home TV sets in the next few years?

### David Loxton

Director, WNET's TV Lab

"I don't think the state of the art matches the state of the energy, particularly in regards to the present portable color technology available to independents. The 'lagavision' of the Sony single tube system causes a lot of problems . . . because of this situation, the finished images have deteriorated since the days of the B&W portapak. Within six months we hear there should be a low light, lower cost, Sony color system which may help considerably. But, aesthetically and technically, the editing of most independent video documentary is still very primitive. The strength of the TV Lab is that we have been able to experiment and work through trial and error to produce good programming with independents. An executive producer can respond quickly to ideas and a lot of resources appropriately, to cover upcoming events, for instance. Although most of the responses to these ideas are 'no', we have the capability to react quickly, if we want to go with one."

### Bill Hess

Producer at WYES-TV,  
PBS in New Orleans

"The objective of a producer is to maximize the technology. And  $\frac{3}{4}$ " isn't necessarily the way to go. We want to reduce the amount of equipment we take out the door, but it might just be AVR-2, shooting in quad. The commercial stations thought they had a technical innovation that they could jump on and use to hype their ratings, but it didn't quite work out that way. It was a ratings decision, not a technical decision, because the equipment doesn't hold up under heavy broadcast use. . . . There is a trend in public TV stations to get on the bandwagon, too. It will probably come down to about 50-50. But a station with a tremendous investment in 2" quad should think seriously before going into portable video too heavily. I want to know the limitations of any medium I'm working in, which is the primary responsibility of anyone in production. Why should we give hard-earned dollars to independents when we have thousands of dollars wrapped up with our own in-house staff? To go the independent road, well, it's that much harder. There is no excuse for a station not to be able to do innovative and quality programming. There's no real reason to go to independents."

### Brian Donnegan

Broadcast manager, programming and  
acquisitions, WTTW, Chicago

"We've been acquiring programming from independent producers for 20 years. For the simple reason, both then and now, that there wasn't enough interesting programming offered to stations from within the PTV system. At any time within our schedule, about 20 to 30% of programming is independently produced. I don't think most independently produced video documentary will succeed in commercial TV. The goals, subject matter, and treatments just aren't commercially viable, would not sell a product. *It's A Living* is an example, broadcast TV probably wouldn't consider a black and white show with this content. This means there will be a greater involvement between independents and public TV, particularly now, with the Ford Foundation and NEA getting together to provide production grants. We can't commission work to be produced, but we have a pretty open policy toward acquisitions."

# TIME SCAN

A chronicle of independents and small format, hardware and programming, events and decisions leading up to the widespread acceptance of portable video on broadcast television.

## 1937

### NBC television mobile unit.

In action in NYC. Consisting of two huge buses. One crammed with a studio and the other housing the transmitter that relayed programs to the Empire State Building for re-broadcast.

## 1947

### Network news shows add newsmile.

From outside producers to their 15 min. evening telecasts. CBS uses Telenews, shooting 16mm film, considered less professional than 35 mm, used by Fox Movietone, serving NBC.

## 1948

### 16,500 TV's.

## 1951

### First network news documentary

First telecast of Edward R. Murrow's *See It Now* series telecasts simultaneous live views of the Atlantic and Pacific coastlines. Commentary mixed with film.

## 1953



### Sarnoff demonstrates videotape.

RCA magnetic tape for recording B&W, and color television pictures.

## 1956

### Release of pre-1948 film features.

Brings decline in local (live) television production.

## 1957

### CBS and NBC use Ampex videotape

For the first time, to record the Eisenhower inauguration.

## 1958

### 50,000,000 TV's.

## 1960

### Networks ban independent news.

NBC-TV explained that its obligation "for objective, fair and responsible presentation of the news developments and issues" required this change in policy. At this time, Robert Drew of Time, Inc. formed a film production group consisting of Ricky Leacock, D.A. Pennebaker, T. McCartney-Filgate and Albert Maysles to produce *Primary*, a verite style documentary of the Kennedy and Humphrey primaries. The program was rejected by all three networks, in accordance with their newly developed policies. Instead, the Drew group temporarily became an ABC-TV news documentary unit producing films to be telecast under the series title *Close-up*.

## 1962

### Broadcasting uses satellites.

Telstar inaugurates satellite relays of TV programs.

## 1963

### Starring Oswald and Ruby.

**December 2.** National NBC television audience sees first live murder, of Lee Harvey Oswald by Jack Ruby.

## 1964

### First instant replays.

New dimension to sports reporting.

### Portable video for consumer service

**July.** American Airlines uses Sony playback system for showing tapes of movies.

## 1965

### TV news uses satellite relay.

**January.** Winston Churchill's funeral from London.

### Network news shifts to color.

## 1967

### Center for Experiments in TV.

Established by the Rockefeller Foundation at KQED, San Francisco.

## 1969

### Half inch for sale.

First 1/2", B&W, portapaks put on the market by Sony.

### CBS investigates portable video.

**December.** SQN, independently incorporated, though operating out of CBS headquarters, spends almost \$100,000 on a portable video, 8mm and 16mm presentation held at the Videofreex studio. Mike Dann, head of CBS programming rejects the work, predicting that it will be 5 years before "television would be ready" for that kind of material. CBS ended up confiscating the tapes, later reclaimed by Don West, executive producer of the venture, who failed to peddle them elsewhere. Crew included staff at Media Center in Lanesville, along with Eric Segal, David Cort, and Davidson Gigliotti. Controversial figures appearing in the tapes included Fred Hampton and Abbie Hoffman.

### First national show of video art.

Produced by Fred Barzyk at WGBH-TV's New Television Workshop. Titled "The Medium is the Medium". It included works by Tambelli, Kaprow, Paik, Seawright, and Piene.

## 1970

### All About TV airs show about video.

**November.** The program, which was in its second season, featured George Stoney of the Alternate Media Center at New York University, discussing what video is, showing a portapak, and excerpts of tapes from New York and elsewhere, shot off monitors in the studio. Some dozen programs featuring video have been aired during the five seasons since then. It's produced at WNYC-TV, New York.

### Synthesizer developed.

By Shuya Abe and Nam June Paik to be used on broadcast TV at WGBH, Boston.

## 1971

### WNEW-TV airs 1/2" tape.

12-minute optical-transfer 1/2" B&W video segment on WNEW-TV's *Midday Live* talkshow, by Downtown Community TV, New York City. Show also aired piece on Global Village.

### CBS uses 1/2".

A videotape report of Eldridge Cleaver in Africa on the Cronkite evening news.

## NBC rejects Mayday tapes.

NBC News and WRC-TV, the NBC owned-and-operated station in Washington supply half-inch videotape to Mayday Video Collective for first-rejection rights on tape shot at demonstrations that tied up traffic throughout the city. The Mayday Video Collective, comprised of dozens of video people from throughout the country, showed raw tape to WRC every day during the week of demonstrations, but the station declined to use any of it. An hour-long edit was shown to the staff of *First Tuesday*, NBC's now-defunct magazine, and the staff wanted to buy it. The idea was killed by Exec Producer Reuben Frank who said, after one look: "That stuff will never appear on NBC." It didn't.



## Portable TV on the moon.

**July 21.** Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin step down on the lunar surface with television cameras in hand. Biggest show in broadcast history involves 1,000 personnel and minimum of \$11 million.

## Attica 1/2" broadcast.

**September 21.** Segment of 1/2", B&W, videotape shot by state troopers at the Attica prison massacre is broadcast on evening news.

## Network uses portable video.

**October.** First use in a field news operation, in coverage of the Lt. Calley trial, a news crew used the CBS-developed minicam coupled to the Ampex 3000 2" deck. They recorded the report, edited it on 2" tape and fed it directly to the network for the evening news cast.

## 1972

### Video and Nixon to China.

**February 14-28.** More than 100 broadcast newspeople and technicians cover Nixon's China trip, using Sony 3/4 inch and other portable color systems.

### Sony U-Matic.

**March.** Video cassette system becomes standard format.

### First all helical station.

**March.** Station CITY in Toronto, Canada. Used B&W Sony Portapak for news coverage and IVC 960's for editing. Resident engineer developed the TK1-EA5 editing system.

### The world's smallest TV station.

**March 19.** Videofree from Lanesville Media Bus. Still broadcasting out of an attic transmitter live and on 1/2" tape to an estimated audience of 70 households in its upstate N.Y. valley. Composite shows from Lanesville have also appeared on WNET.



## The Experimental TV Lab.

At WNET-13, NY public TV station. First grant by Rockefeller Foundation to Lab of \$150,000.

## TVTV broadcasts the Nixon show.

First "electronically broadcast" half-inch video: two 1/2-hour, 1/2-inch docs, *The World's Largest TV Studio* and *Four More Years*, portapak coverage of the convention produced by TVTV, aired by KQED-TV, PBS affiliate in S.F. A 90-minute five Group W (Westinghouse) stations in Balt., S.F., Boston, Phil., and Pittsburgh. It was dubbed to quad and run through a TBC. The show had been partially financed by NY cable TV and cablecast in August-September of 1972.

## 1973

### Behind The Lines uses 1/2".

**April.** TVTV produces a 12 min. segment on 1/2" titled *The Rolling Stone* on the PBS national feed.

## WETA-TV's 1st independent video.

**April.** *Housing in Anacostia* — a WETA production on a local neighborhood's housing problems featured a live studio audience and taped vignettes produced by Project Accountability in cooperation with Washington Community Video Center on 1/2" B&W tape.

## First Time Base Corrector.

**May.** Put on the market by CVS.

## Coos Country TV 1/2" on KCBY

**August.** Tapes from the Grange Hall. Through July, 1975, Steve Christiansen and Bill Bradbury, with federal funding for land use planning, put the people of Coos Bay, Oregon on TV, and win a Broadcasting Public Services Award of the Year. Both are now part of the ENG team at all video KVAL, Eugene, Oregon.

## "Fifty Wonderful Years" on KQED.

**September.** A half-hour documentary shot on half-inch by Optic Nerve in San Francisco was "image-buffed" (shot off monitor) by the public TV station. The program was an ironic view of the 50th Miss California pageant. It caused a few problems with the union, which was beginning contract negotiations at the time of airing.

## Video: the new wave.

Produced by Barzyk at WGBH, a one-hour narrated composite of 1/2" documentary and video art.

## 1974

### Cronkite news adds ENG.

CBS begins using the Ikegami color portable video camera (price—\$49,000). The news crew travels in a station wagon with an IVC 1" cartridge recorder, a CVS TBC, a small wave form monitor, and a battery operated, 5" trinitron monitor.

## KSD, St. Louis buys Akai.

First station to use the Akai portable color system for news production.

## PBS airs first 1/2" show.

**Feb. 24.** First hour-length 1/2" videotape program airs nationally over PBS. *The Lord of the Universe*, a documentary of the 1973 Houston Astrodome gathering of the followers of 16-year-old Guru Maharaj Ji. Funded by Stern Foundation and CPB. Crew of 24 in five portapak teams, produce a 60-min. B&W (with color segment) program.

## Video visionaries.

First national videoart showcase series. Produced by Barzyk at WGBH.

## Independent series in Rochester.

**February 28.** Portable Channel begins airing of locally produced, 1/2", B&W, documentaries on public TV station WXXI in Rochester, N.Y. This documentary/magazine format series, titled *Homemade TV* is broadcast by optical transfer (shooting off the monitor) of the 1/2" tape. Twenty-seven have aired thus far.

## WTTW, PTV Chicago airs TVTV.

**April.** TVTV airs *Adland*, a 60 min. 1/2" B&W (with color) documentary on the television advertising industry.

## DXC-1600 on market.

**September.** Sony begins sales of the color portable camera (price \$7,000). Soon after begins sales of VO-3800, accompanying portable 3/4" color cassette recorder.



## Changing channels: 1/2" in Minn.

**October.** A bi-weekly, Alternative magazine show produced on 1/2" video systems by University Community Video, Minneapolis, Minn. Still airing weekly over KCTA-public TV station.



### First national 1/2" color over PBS.

**December 2.** *Cuba the People*, produced by John Alpert, Keiko Tsumo, and Yoko Marunyan of Downtown Community Television. Recorded on the 1/2", JVC color system, it is a documentation of the groups' travels. They were the first television crew given such extensive reporting privileges inside revolutionary Cuba. Total production cost was \$30,000 from private donations. CPB acquired the show for national air for \$12,000 plus post-production support from WNET-TV.

## 1975

### Gerald Ford's America on PBS.

**January.** The four part series produced by TTVT. The first of their WNET-TV financed shows. Produced on 1/2", color.

### VTR in NYC

**February 5.** Beginning of WNET-TV's *Video and Television Review* (VTR), the first series showcasing works of video artists and documentarians. The 26-week series, executive producer David Loxton, ran weekly in N.Y.

### 1st viewer-sponsored TV opens.

KVST-TV, the nation's first completely viewer-sponsored TV station, goes on the air in Los Angeles. Modeled on the Pacifica radio stations, KVST was capitalized at \$1 million and planned an ambitious schedule of community-oriented programming with a distinct anti-Establishment bent, including a large amount of video produced by local groups around town. The station closed in early 1976 because of internal strife and lack of funding.

### WNET-TV airs *In Hiding*.

**May 19.** The controversial interview with underground Abbie Hoffman (a segment also aired on the Cronkite evening news, that night). Produced by TTVT, who paid Abbie \$3,000 for the show (plus a cassette playback system for the underground). The day after *In Hiding* aired in N.Y., Fred Friendly of the Ford Foundation, which was credited with partial support of the program said, "I would be derelict if one nickel of tax free money went towards payment for an interview with a fugitive from justice."

### CMX-40 automated editing.

**June.** First used at WSM-TV in Nashville and KSD-TV, St. Louis. Offers absolute frame accuracy with time code display.

### TTV air TTV's Cajun program

**June 25.** *The Good Times Are Killing Me*, an hour, color show by TTVT on the Cajun Mardi Gras. Shot on the Sony 3/4" color system. First use of nagra, crystal sync sound with portable video.

### TR1-EA5

**July.** Pushbutton editing system. Taken to Peking by ABC to cover President Ford's China visit.

### New Orleans Video Access Center.

**July.** Airs a program about a local controversy over the building of another bridge over the Miss. River. Shot on 1/2" B&W and aired over WYES-TV, the public station.

### KMOX-TV goes all ENG.

**September.** First local station news operation to go all-electronic. CBS owned-and-operated station KMOX in St. Louis changed its news crews over to portable video.

### 3/4" series syndicated.

**October.** First independently produced and commercially syndicated news short series, produced on the Sony 3/4" color system (edited on 2"). Barrie Rebo Enterprises, through Time-Life, produces 3 min. consumer news pieces for the local evening news on 50 stations around the country.

### PBS breakthrough.

**December.** First video production aired on PBS national feed that didn't come through a station. Martha Stuart's two half-hour documentaries, *Are You Listening: International Women's Year* conference in Mexico City were shot on video and aired nationally.

### San Quentin 1/2" tape on CBS News

**December.** The CBS Evening News ran less than two minutes of 1/2" color tape shot inside San Quentin by Marin Community Video, a group which had been documenting prison conditions for months. Significant was the fact that CBS only used the portion of the tape showing guards killing inmates. PBS is undecided on Marin's full-length documentary.

## 1976

### 1/2" on public TV in Houston.

KUHT airs showcase for independent film and video called *The Territory*. Two video programs air in first series—one on teenage drug addiction, another on Hopi Indians by Turtle Island Media Environments.

### Microcam: 8 pound color camera.

**January.** Thomson CSF Labs unveils an eight pound camera including lens and view finder with a 3 pound pack. At 11 total pounds, the lightest by far. Priced under \$30,000.

### Video producers form coalition.

**February.** To pressure public TV to open up to independent producers, especially new groups using portable video techniques. Coalition for New Public Affairs Programming was created by 15 video groups in broadcasting with public TV stations or PBS. Group's statement to public TV asked for fund for independent documentaries.

### PBS airs *Super Bowl* by TTVT.

**March.** Eight color, portable video crews.

### Public TV in LA airs 1st 1/2".

**April.** KCET-TV airs its first 1/2" video show, *An Intimate Portrait—54 Years* by Thomas and Rodger Klein. A B&W personal documentary about their grandparents.

### Portugal on WGBH.

**April 26.** Boston public station airs 10-minute edit on local news show of 3/4" footage by Miles Mogulescieu made in Portugal. Project received \$7,000 from CPB for rough cut but was rejected for further consideration. WGBH picked up final cut costs, but only bought 10 minutes.

### Broadside goes broadcast.

Video group in East Tennessee shoots two projects on 3/4" — documentaries of a symphony conductor and a bluegrass festival — for eventual airing on state PTV network.

### TTV shoots *The Academy Awards*

**April.** Financed by KCET in LA and PBS. National airing over PBS next spring.

### SPC buys 1st 3/4" series.

**May.** Public TV's Station Program Cooperative selects first series produced primarily with small format video. *Studio See*, produced by South Carolina ETV Network, was selected by 83 stations.

### Video artists get PTV grants.

**May.** CPB/NEA select first video artists for residency at public TV stations.

### 3/4" Workshops for 10 PTV stations.

**May.** Project funded to involve public TV stations and video producers at workshops in small format video technology. The National Endowment for the Arts, Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Rockefeller Foundation contributed \$80,000 total to a project by Global Village in New York, in cooperation with the Coalition for New Public Affairs Programming, to conduct 10 workshops in video-cassette use at public TV stations during 1977.

### A Fund for independents.

**May.** Proposal for an Independent Documentary Fund was announced by the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. An estimated half-million dollars was pledged by the two groups to support new productions in film and video by independents for the PBS network.

### Chicago series on working.

**June 7-12.** Airing over WTTW, a six part series produced on 1/2", B&W, *It's a Living*, by Videopolis, executive producer, Anda Korsts.

### The VTR series second season.

**July.** Produced by WNET, begins airing over 50 public TV stations in the Eastern Educational Network.

# Television has an all-electronic future

# W

hen CBS-TV

decided in 1969 that the network would not yet be ready for small-format video for another five years, it was factoring into its corporate plans something that few of the video freaks using the new Japanese portapaks then realized. Acceptance of this new method of producing TV for the mass media required not only technological innovation and stylistic experimentation, but also profitability.

By late 1971 they determined the economic advantage of so-called Electronic News Gathering hardware. A year later station KMOX in St. Louis was selected to become the nation's first all-electronic news operation, which was accomplished by September, 1974. Right on schedule.

Today some 410 television stations have invested in ENG. The national network news will be all-electronic by 1980.

The increasing sophistication of the electronic hardware allowed broadcasters to consider replacing film and 2" quad video with miniaturized color cameras, videocassette decks, time-base error correctors, computer editing systems and small scale mobile microwave units.

Although the initial capital investments seem prohibitive, ENG is actually considerably more economical because it can eliminate recurring costs of film processing, and can realize substantially greater productivity from news workers. Crews can be smaller, and can produce more stories per day by relaying either live or taped material via microwave and then moving on to the next assignment.

What video groups initially saw as a political or at least stylistic objective — to free television from its deadly elitism, its aesthetic sameness, and rigid formats — was always a technical and business decision for the broadcasters. Much to the chagrin of many journalists, "live-action" news — developed as a result of the new hardware — became yet another ratings hype, a further trivializing element like the "happy talk" fad that swept the business a few years before.

While broadcasters emphasize the use of this hardware for live, "as-it-happens" news, an entirely different set of values motivated the video groups which developed during the same period. A dozen such outfits are now working with small-format hardware for a broadcast audience, most of it over the Public Broadcasting Service or a local public TV station.

The qualities of video which are cherished by its proponents are self-evident: the ability to use immediate playback for involving the subject with

the material — feedback; the lower cost for tape than film, which encourages longer takes, less manipulation of subject; the immediacy and intimacy projected by the image and the presence of "real" ambient sound; hence, a greater emphasis on what had been known in film as *verite* style.

The video groups have widely varying opinions about what the "inherent" qualities of video are, and which of these (if any), can be successfully transferred to a medium of mass proportions. Most got their start doing small-scale productions on highly personal or specialized subjects — programs which were shown in lofts, galleries, clinics, storefronts, or over the budding public access channels of cable TV systems. This was "narrow-casting", a radically different vision of television from the traditional, mass-appeal broadcast.

With the rapid development of higher quality hardware, one of the main reasons for narrow-casting had been removed. The TV stations which had once refused to broadcast small-format video by video independents were not only beginning to do it themselves, but many video groups had proven that a new style of television could be delivered over the airwaves. Video no longer needs to be "proven."

The most successful of the broadcast-oriented video is TTV, which has set its sights exclusively on broadcasting, and would like to make it in commercial TV. Their task, as they see it, is to come up with creative packages which the TV execs will buy. Michael Shamborg puts it this way: It's an organizational question, telling them "We're not crazy. You can do business with us. We want to do business with you." Shamborg sees TTV's greatest competition, not in other video groups, but Lorne Michaels, who produces *Saturday Night* for NBC. "And he's about two years ahead of us."

This is what some video people see as "selling out." They say that the qualities of video which need development are those which stem from its roots in narrow-casting, that producing a media event like the Superbowl or Academy Awards like TTV did this year is eons from showing a tape on how to apply for food stamps in a welfare office waiting room.

This is not only a political criticism, but a stylistic one — a claim that broadcasting is fundamentally a different medium than video. That the quest for mass audiences will corrupt the qualities of video which make it so effective.

Many videomakers disagree with both points of view, rejecting the commercialism and spectacle of TTV, while still hoping to reach broadcast's vast audience. Two videomakers in Eugene, Ore. have been hired by KVAL-TV, an NBC affiliate, after working in small format for two years with a smaller station in Coos Bay, Ore.

Steve Christianson sees the real future for independents with small, independent stations, which cannot afford the research and development costs of OTO's and affiliates. At KVAL they produce two-to-three minute features for the news, which the station manager says capture "the common touch." They have control of their own stories, as if they were freelancers. In fact, Christianson says they would prefer to work that way, though the station has blocked it.

Others predict that certain kinds of documentaries can only be produced by the video groups — personal-style works and intimate portraits of people, which require virtually living with the subjects, as well as the TTV-type events that field 40-50 people. These are impractical for even the largest stations, which cannot afford huge staffs year-round.

Video independents who have worked with local stations — mostly public stations — are more cynical about the future. As many see it, the broadcasters are only using them now as guinea pigs for the technology, without incorporating any of the stylistic or content changes. They predict that the networks will either absorb independents or ignore them.

At any rate, the options for exploring these tensions seem to be expanding. Less than two years ago, the terrain looked bleak. Commercial networks have had a policy of accepting virtually no independent productions news or public affairs since 1960, due, they claimed, to their concern for unbiased and reliable content. Historian Erik Barnouw argues rather that the networks refused the test case — a documentary on the space race — because they each had their own crews working on similar projects and didn't want the competition.

# N

owadays, some independent videomakers are talking to the networks, and some deals will be signed soon, probably for so-called entertainment programming, which, unlike news, is already produced largely by non-network independents. But the blurring of distinctions between entertainment and the news and public affairs may affect the exclusionary policy. In addition, the networks will continue to seek acquisition clauses in their negotiations with labor.

Public TV is going much further. The Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts have proposed to fund independent documentaries, though details remain fuzzy. A new PBS president has made noises in favor of independents. A new project by Global

Village will carry a workshop on videocassette production styles and techniques to 10 public TV stations next year.

While public TV has been historically more receptive to video as produced by independents, questions remain as to whether the "noncommercial system" will perform as an alternative, or whether it is becoming increasingly like its commercial counterparts. While relationships between stations and independents have developed, it's no secret that many producers and engineers in the public TV system aren't wild about working with independents. And there have been continuing conflicts between unionized technical personnel and the independents, who are low-paid and non-union.

In fact, labor issues are at the center of electronic journalism's rapid rise. Jurisdictional battles over the hardware continue to rage between IBEW, NABET, film camera operators and editors in a patchwork structure that even the union bureaucrats can't figure out.

The recent NABET strike against NBC was the first of the three network contracts to come due since the heavy influx of ENG, and the question of the union's control of the equipment was an issue. Unions work to entirely exclude from TV any talent which hasn't been nurtured through the station route, since they rightly see management as all too anxious to union bust by exploiting unorganized, low-paid talent on a freelance basis. At the same time, the unions aren't taking a very aggressive or creative role in retraining their members to the new demands of small format video, which independents have pioneered.

And the future? Video will become the dominant format for all production on television, replacing film in much entertainment as well as news programming, which will continue to look more and more alike. Video will not only be used for technical and cost reasons, but because TV is essentially an electronic medium. With the growth of domestic satellites, even greater potential will exist for instantaneous image transmission.

Late-night TV formats will fill the last remaining hours of the broadcast day, at least on weekends. By the 1980's TV may look more like the radio, filling all that time with programming produced on increasingly sophisticated miniature video hardware.

The next decade will also be a time when pay TV, cable, and videodiscs will offer the greatest competitive challenge to broadcast profits since the medium's beginning, and will force radical alternatives in the function of TV. Newscasts, which are now up to two hours locally, will be an hour-per-night by next year on the networks.

Video will allow the inclusion of new images and voices in longer formats. Reality will be used to sell the news.

# Sit Coms

By WILLIAM KOWINSKI

Early in 1960 I remember seeing a network special which attempted to sum up the just completed decade. It was called "The Fabulous Fifties." After seeing it I had to agree: the fifties were fabulous. But what did I know? I was 14.

The scruffy, stylish, sacrilegious, sizzling psychedelic sixties are long gone and even the simpering seventies are half over. But the situation comedies of the 1950s still remain, the ones I used to watch back when I was around the age of the minds they were rumored to be made for — 12. They're turning up again on UHF and cable stations, or as late afternoon breaks from game shows and their living color greed. In New York City and around the country the acknowledged classics of the period are once again earning yuks and bucks — Jackie Gleason's *The Honeymooners*, Phil Silvers as Sargeant Bilko in what was originally called *You'll Never Get Rich*, and of course the various incarnations of *I Love Lucy*.

In Boston this summer one station (WLVI, channel 56) dolloped up two hours of other fifties favorites in prime time every night: two back-to-back half hours of *Our Miss Brooks* with Eve Arden, *Love that Bob* (Bob Cummings), *Dobie Gillis* (Dwayne Hickman, Bob Denver), *Topper* (Leo G. Carroll), *Burns and Allen* (Burns and Allen), *Great Gildersleeve* (Willard Waterman), *December Bride* (Spring Byington), *Ann Sothern*, *People's Choice* (Jackie Cooper), and *My Little Margie* (Gale Storm), sandwiched between two half-hour segments of *The Best of Groucho*. Happy Days.

They seem to do well. Thousands this summer eschewed the pleasure of watching *Harry O*, the CBS movie and *Evening Edition with Martin Agronsky* to hunker down with Spring Byington as she plotted to bring Pete (played by Harry Morgan, before he became Mr. Grim, Jack Webb's holster buddy), back together with Gladys, the wife he ritually insults. All between basement budgeted commercials for the greatest hits of the Cuff-links, the Eternals, the Nutmegs, and of course (who could forget?) Faye Adams, 36 original do-wah dandies.

The tie-in on some stations with the fifties music nostalgia packages indicates how these shows are being marketed — as the good old days. In fact they happened at a time when American life was changing rapidly, and television was becoming an intricate and intimate part of the change. *The Honeymooners*, featuring two lower middle-class white families living in what amounts to a New York tenement could get away with humor in the early fifties about things like Ralph Cramden's opposition to getting a telephone, that in just a few years would become inconceivable on something like the *Donna Reed Show* or even the premiere middle-class suburban sitcom, *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*.

The sponsors in those days were solid staples — and items that were scarce during the war — like cigarettes (Philip Morris and their famous 'call for . . .' advert sponsored *Great Gildersleeve*) and gasoline (from the first — Texaco's Milton Berle). The latest fad was detergent for dishes — pushed for the miraculous fact that after being washed in detergent, the dishes dried all by themselves! White America's move to the suburbs (accomplished in one memorable episode of *I Love Lucy*) brought along with it more sophisticated sponsors, as America grew more cosmetic, dietetic and frenetic.

Besides the nostalgia appeal of anything on film that was processed before last Thursday's *EyeWitness News*, these shows are genuine TV history. After all, they aren't simply in the situation comedy tradition, they were inventing it. Though the form had existed on radio since the thirties and had been exploited in one-shot and serial Hollywood movies, the sitcom represented something new in television — something that was to influence its whole character.

Until the mid-fifties, almost all network television shows were produced in New York and most of them — from drama to comedy-variety — were live. Then three things fell on TV simultaneously: film, Hollywood and the situation comedy. Some believe that together they smothered television's first creative breaths, in its so-called "Golden Age," introducing mass production, infinite repeatability ("Twenty-six originals and twenty-four reruns — is that really the destiny of television?" NBC executive Mort Werner was once heard to murmur. Of course not, Mort. Who does twenty-six originals anymore?)

And inevitably — the formula. A formula — the star, the supporting cast of characters and their environment — is the essence of sitcom. Dozens of living rooms and kitchen tables — *Ozzie and Harriet*, *Father Knows Best*, *Donna Reed* — alternating with slew of offices — Ann Sothern's, Dick van Dyke's, Mary Tyler Moore's. Even a couple of war zones, a desert island, the cosmos (*Lost in Space*, indeed) are suitable for sitcomting. The formula lends continuity and comfort, makes it easier for audiences to identify, week after week, with the actor-characters and the show itself, unlike the more taxing unpredictability of comedy-variety or talk shows. (Even these have stock characters and gestures, from Cher's floozie to Carson's swami, or the ritual camera sequence and banter of the first minutes of the *Tonight Show*.)

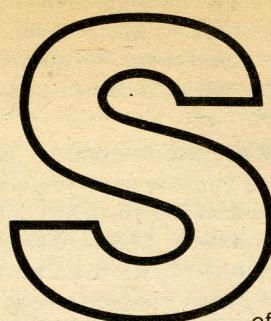
A lot distinguishes the fifties' sitcoms from their seventies' descendants. It seemed easier to be silly about petty violence then (people got "knocked out" with regularity) and generally there was more reliance on outlandish "sits" to encourage the "com." Nowadays it's done with more emphasis on character. The difference in the function of racial and nationality stereotype is especially enlightening. In the fifties they were dropped in innocently as genuine slurs. Today they are supposedly funny because they reveal a character's bigotry — the verbal equivalent of a graceless pratfall. We have become so much more self-conscious in 20 years (thanks to TV). But the jokes themselves haven't changed.

Whether today's sitcoms are more realistic is a tougher question than it first appears. If the fifties dealt exclusively with white, middle-class, stereotyped inanity, have Norman Lear and his funny friends done much more than give us non-white and working class stereotyped inanity? Yet sitcoms of both these decades are far superior to those of the sixties, when no one remotely real appeared, unless you happened to identify with the Addams Family or the Clampetts. It's in this sense that the seventies sitcoms are a real improvement. The white, middle-class, nuclear family still hasn't seen much of itself since the fifties. Perhaps it's because sitcom characters have to be likable, and these families aren't finding as much to like about their lives as they used to.

One thing hasn't changed from then to now in sitcoms — their heavy reliance on the acting skills of secondary characters, which has frequently been so excellent that they are better and more fondly remembered than the stars: The laconic druggist in *Gildersleeve* and Ronald Keith as the indefatigable Leroy; Dwayne Hickman, much better in his subsidiary role to Bob Cummings than his starring one as Dobie Gillis; Richard Crenna as Walter in *Our Miss Brooks*; Bob Denver and Tuesday Weld in *Dobie Gillis*; the aforementioned Harry Morgan in *December Bride* (which won him his own brief sitcom, *Pete and Gladys*) — and who can thank *Burns and Allen* enough for giving the world Harry Von Zelle? For clear but clever characterization and professional acting there have never been supporting casts as good as that of *Mary Tyler Moore*, or *MASH* in its heyday. But the fifties second bananas were loonier — the chief remaining virtue of their shows — and since they didn't have to bear the brunt of the often less-than-hilarious main action, they survive as the best continuing feature, as bemused in perpetuity as we are now by the bizarre machinations of plots and stars.

Responding to the recent outcry against frankness and violence in television entertainment, the National Association of Broadcasters has decreed that nothing that someone's mythical children can't safely watch will be aired before 9 p.m. This and other pressure to tone down was reportedly being felt by the producers of this season's sitcoms, who have to worry about not only this year's time slot, but the eventual early evening syndicated re-runs. When a reporter asked Ed Weinberger, executive producer of this year's hit *Phyllis* (starring Cloris Leachman) whether this interference, especially from the FCC wasn't the beginning of Big Brother and 1984, Weinberger said darkly, "No — it's Kid Brother, 1954." While slightly less brightness in the gore on *Emergency!* might not be cause for too much alarm, a return to the fifties' sitcom is not too bright at all. The fifties sitcoms excelled in fantasy, when they excelled at all, and with the self-consciousness and aura of awareness the seventies shows depend on, much of that attractive quality is lost. But that kind of innocence can't be regained.

William Kowinski is an editor of *Newsworks*, a weekly paper in Washington, D.C.



comics pit the peculiarities of recognizable characters

in a consistent setting with a familiar pattern of relationships, against a feisty illusion-bursting world. Sitcoms are like families — or rather, an idea of families. They have continuity and chaos, therefore conflict, but on a scale that Americans coping with the trials of post-war prosperity (proms, mortgages, dented fenders and crabgrass) could accept. The form of the formula makes the sitcoms seem just like us. The question is, are we really like them? Looking at the sitcoms of the fifties you have to wonder, is this really the way we were?

For all their differences, two basic categories of conflict generate the plots of these programs: authority (boss, teacher, parents) and sex. The stereotype boss, in particular, was always the same, from Mr. Honeywell (*Margie*) to Mayor Peoples (*People's Choice*): he was always big and blustery — a tyrant and dope who had to be impressed, mollified and/or hoodwinked. Ditto for the other authority figures, including (at least before the advent of Robert Young) fathers.

The way sexual roles and relationships are portrayed is probably the most conspicuous social feature of these sitcoms. *Love That Bob*, *Gildersleeve*, *Dobie Gillis* — the raison d'comedie for all of them is the pursuit of "girls," while on *Margie* etc. it's the girls who try to trap the "boys," all of which is played on the most inane level — a level, one fears, that says all too much about the state of inter-sex behavior in the fifties. These two themes were united with the nauseating but somehow admirable panache in *Ann Sothern*, where week after week office supervisor Katie O'Connor tries to trap the newest junior exec while her roommate Olive gushes, faints and bleats, and Mr. Devery, their boss, froths and simpers — but to no avail, since he is putty in the red lacquered pinkies of dear Kate. "What're you up to?" Mr. Devery growls. "L'il plot," Katie sing-songs.

# NEWS FROM THE VIDEOSPHERE

## Hawkers and Hookers Hustle Hardware at NAB Convention

### Broadcasters Discover Video

By PARRY TEASDALE

Backstage magazine summed up this year's National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) convention in its banner headline, "NAB A TECH PARADISE — Exhibits May Outweigh Issues." With TV advertising sales up 15 to 30 percent over last year, programmers banished to their own convention, the NATPE — for allegedly giving previous NAB conventions a "circus" atmosphere — and a strong and effective lobbying effort underway to thwart pay TV, the only things left for most NAB conventioneers to worry about were how to keep up the good work next year and what new toys to buy. In this situation the massive equipment display became the inevitable focus of the convention.

Collected into one four-and-a-half acre room in Chicago's giant McCormick Place convention center was \$15 million worth of high voltage TV and radio gear — and the sales people to go along with it — all humming and sizzling at once. A few impressions still stand out:

— The major exhibitors — Ampex, Sony, IVC, RCA, Bosch-Fernseh — all had regularly scheduled shows which were coordinated with hypnotic precision between the display floor and numerous monitors hung overhead. After a short time in these environments you began to lose track of what's live and what's on tape. Everything and everyone seemed to be framed in a monitor.

— A man ran around the exhibit floor with a Rube Goldberg-type device strapped to his torso: a gyroscopic camera brace that looked like the mechanical arms to a giant dentist's drill. On this brace was mounted a cumbersome RCA portable color camera with a large monitor on top. The demonstration proved a man could bounce all over the place and the camera movement would still remain completely smooth.

— Broadcast TV hardware is a man's world. Women were automatically assumed to be either wives or manufacturers' models. The latter served as "hardware hookers," circulating through the exhibit spaces pandering to engineers and station managers. The intent was to humanize ponderous electronic devices.

The convention did show that broadcasters have finally discovered portable video. Local stations — comprising NAB membership — have been left only one major category of local programming by the networks: news and public affairs. Whatever the reasons — Watergate, heightened citizen concern, or boredom with regular TV fare — news has become potentially profitable.

Local stations are competing for audiences at news time just as the networks compete for the rest of the broadcast day. Competition has provided innovations like the "happy news" format: newscasters exchange jolly inanities between

reports of disasters and tragedies.

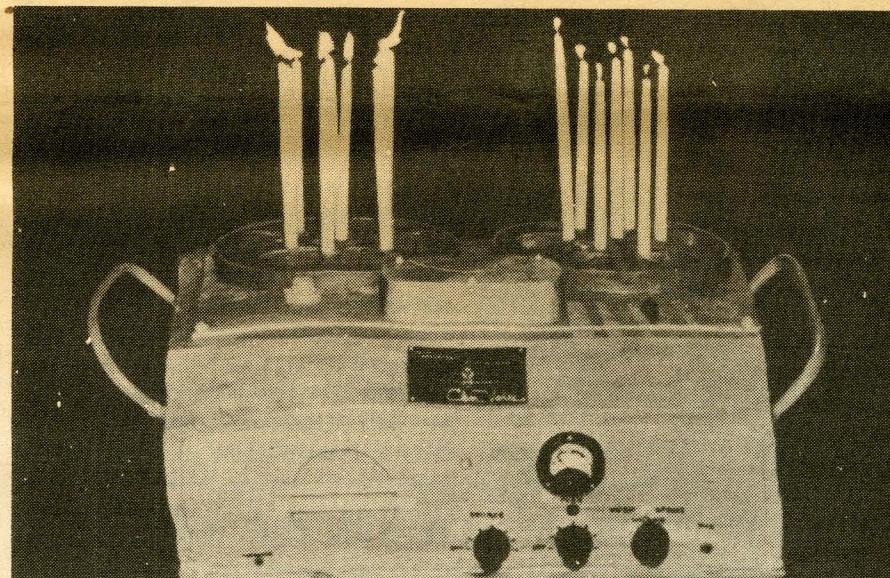
Competition has also placed a premium on on-the-spot visual coverage of local events — "Eyewitness News," "Action News," etc. The standard equipment of this coverage used to be 16mm film with sync sound where necessary.

The term "broadcast quality" when used in reference to the video signal, exclusive of sync, is not an absolute technical specification. It is a kind of nebulous reference to the types of pictures broadcasters are, and aren't, willing to put on the air. "Broadcast quality" is determined more by station budgets, market competition, and geographical location than by signal-to-noise ratios and resolution charts.

If there had been, it might have stolen the spotlight at the show simply because the price would have been unique.

The development of time base correctors has been as responsible for the ENG surge as the new line of portable color cameras. Without TBCs broadcasters would still be locked into using expensive and complex quadruplex "portable" VTRs, thus excluding all but the richest stations from ENG.

There were about a dozen TBCs on display at the NAB. Four years ago there weren't any TBCs for these uses. Four years ago the only way to transfer a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " or  $\frac{3}{4}$ " tape to a quad VTR — or send it directly out on the air and still meet FCC standards — was to point a studio cam-



Slice of life: Sony celebrated its 30th anniversary this year with their birthday cake — the company's first magnetic recorder.

At a show like the NAB where standards are supposed to be high, there's a certain amount of face-saving necessary where broadcast quality is concerned. A good example is Hitachi, which was demonstrating several ENG cameras, one of which cost only \$4,400.

In order to avoid embarrassing broadcast quality technical questions from the more affluent conventioneers, Hitachi billed the camera as ideal for CCTV work. That's a little silly, considering almost everyone at the show was a broadcaster — even they aren't about to use a \$4,400 color camera for surveillance.

There was a lot of interest in the Hitachi and the other low cost color cameras (Akai, JVC, and Panasonic) anyway by stations in the smaller markets around the country. They too feel the pressure for on-the-spot, color coverage but don't have \$23,000 or more to spend on the more sophisticated models.

There are a lot of stations doing their ENG coverage with CCTV equipment. Oddly enough, there wasn't one camera priced between \$5,000 and \$23,000.

era at a monitor and scan convert or re-record the  $\frac{1}{2}$ " tape through this optical method.

This was unsatisfactory because the difference between the frequencies of the tape played back and the studio sync caused a dark bar to waver through the screen. There was also a chance for loss of resolution and grey scale. Most important, color transfers by this method were virtually impossible.

Time base correctors allow most tapes to meet FCC stability requirements by converting the wayward sync signals from original tapes into computer-type, digital pulses. These pulses can then be manipulated electronically to compensate for extreme stability errors.

The types of errors most TBCs correct are the type inherent in  $\frac{1}{2}$ " and  $\frac{3}{4}$ " portable recordings. By purchasing a TBC and a low-cost color portable camera and VTR, a local station can turn its news crew loose with portable video equipment, confident that the tapes made in the field can be broadcast.

With the increased demand for live

Trends and key stories in ten fields of electronic media: Broadcast TV, Cable TV, Regulation.

Citizen Action, Social Services, Art, Hardware, Education, Libraries, and Video Production.

### HARDWARE

coverage coinciding with a series of technological and marketing developments, dependence on 16mm film has been drastically reduced. In its place has come ENG, Electronic News Gathering equipment.

Unlike film, ENG or portable video fits neatly into the broadcast scheme of economics. Judging from the equipment shown at the NAB, the average cost of an ENG system using a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " portable VTR, ENG camera and a time base corrector would be about \$45 to \$55 thousand: or about the cost of one, very ordinary, quadruplex video tape recorder. The cost could be much less, under \$20,000, depending on the type equipment.

This cost is only for the initial investment. Running the equipment, in terms of tape costs, is rather low.

This corresponds with the operating principles of a TV station. The initial capital investment is high but the overhead is kept within reason.

The opposite is true of film because of the continued expense of processing it. The advent of ENG has allowed stations to substantially cut, and often eliminate, their news film expenses. Furthermore, the makers of VTRs and cameras were previously excluded from a large market in local hardware sales because they did not manufacture film and film processing equipment.

ENG as a saleable concept has opened whole new sales horizons to these hardware companies. Because of its relative cheapness it is one of the first real challenges to the exclusivity other hardware-makers and TV stations once claimed.

ENG's popularity was self-evident on the exhibit floor of the NAB. The Kodak display area, where the slogan was "Film — the Basic Medium," looked forlorn and deserted. The broadcasters were elsewhere inspecting some 22 portable color cameras on display.

Every manufacturer, large and small, had an ENG camera on display regardless of whether or not they made that camera. Ampex, for example, displayed two ENG cameras. Ampex is probably the most prestigious manufacturer of VTRs, having developed the first practical, by broadcasting standards, VTR in 1956.

Ampex is rightfully proud of its technical achievements. It is usually more than willing to overload the most casual questioner with mountains of facts and specifications — except where their portable color cameras are concerned. The salesmen were ill at ease explaining those cameras. Neither camera, it developed, was made by Ampex.

Marketing someone else's equipment is nothing new to the video industry. Ampex once tried to sell Japanese  $\frac{1}{2}$ " VTRs with disastrous results. It's a measure of how intense the competition for the ENG market has become when a company with the engineering reputation of Ampex rushes out and buys a couple of color cameras they haven't designed.

The price of a portable color camera ranges from about \$5,000 to \$90,000. The variation in the cost of portable cameras depends on what is necessary to achieve a "broadcast quality" picture.

Anyone else who has portable video equipment can bring tapes to the station, confident that, technically at least, those

tapes can also be broadcast. In this sense, the advent of time base correctors has broken down technical and financial obstacles to airing outside programmers.

Time base correctors have become so sophisticated there is little the more expensive ones won't correct. Delta Microtime demonstrated three time base correctors: one corrected errors on a cassette tape made while the VTR was being roughly swung around. That type of equipment leaves room for a pretty great margin for technical error in locally-produced programming.

Because ENG systems cannot exist without time base correctors, any station with ENG coverage could be pressured to play tapes made by outside producers.

Videotape recorders are also essential to ENG production. A survey of new VTRs reveals that with the price of plastic up, the size of tape is down.

Just last year the VTR manufacturers were scoffing at 1" VTRs as "industrial" — meaning not broadcast quality. This year they displayed the pride of their new line of 1", broadcast VTRs.

None of the three major new 1" VTRs at the show were compatible with each

other. Only the Ampex was compatible with anything ever made before. It was as if the equipment manufacturers had decided that 20 years of one standard, 2" quad, was enough.

The outrageous cost of quad recorders and 2" tape have done a lot to change the attitude of broadcasters toward 1/2" and 3/4" VTRs. The cost of a quad VTR with electronic editing facilities can run well over \$100,000. The price of a comparably-equipped Sony 1" VTR is a meager \$45,000.

"Standardization," said Sony's VP in charge of broadcast products David McDonald, "benefits manufacturers." According to him, changes in formats are to the customers' advantage. Why then, has Sony come up with so many different VTR formats? The answer revives the familiar hardware song, "The Customer Made Me Do It."

The customers have been real busy pushing the major VTR manufacturers around, then, because there were two other major non-standard, broadcast 1" VTRs at the NAB show ready to solve all the problems of the broadcast industry. One of those two, the VTR manufactured

by the German company Robert Bosch-Fernseh, will be marketed in this country by the manufacturer itself, as well as by RCA, by Phillips, and by IVC, which already has its own non-standard, 1", broadcast VTR, and a non-standard 2" as well.

Ampex also has a new 1" VTR. It is virtually indistinguishable in outward appearance and electronic performance from a quad. The greatest contribution Ampex could make to solving the confusion of the new 1" VTRs was the spectacle of two company sales engineers furiously arguing with each other over whether or not their new 1" VTR was compatible with any of their previous VTR tape formats. The senior engineer, who took the negative position, won.

Only Bosch-Fernseh is making a 1" portable VTR. It weighs 45 pounds and each one of those pounds currently costs a thousand dollars. ENG is still relegated to 1/2" and 3/4" VTRs.

The other activities at the NAB may not have involved hardware but they were just as mechanical. Jesse Jackson got up at one of the workshops and delivered

the required chastisement of the lily-white broadcast industry to deaf ears. NAB President Wasilewski sounded the "call to arms" as he prepared to slay the dragon of pay-TV. CBS newsman Douglas Edwards waxed nostalgic over a 20-year-old video tape recording, the first, of himself on the CBS TV news. And FCC Chairman Richard Wiley stroked the assembly with soothing assurances of longer license terms, no challenges to existing licenses and fuzzy enforcement under the heading of the "New Ethic."

A shuttle bus took NAB conventioneers from McCormick Place to their hotels in downtown Chicago. On the last day of the convention the young bus driver described his impressions of the riders as the bus emptied.

"The NAB? No, they ain't no different from no other convention people." He paused for a moment and then said, "Cept, y'know, it's funny, they always want t' know what all of them antennas on the buildings is for."

**Parry Teasdale works for the Media Center in Lanesville, N.Y.**

Dolby system for video wherein the high frequencies are sacrificed for the sake of noise suppression. The claim is a little sensational, but in practice they can get away with it.

In time base correctors of the \$12,000 to \$15,000 range there has been some improvement in the window or margin for incoming error that the TBCs will accept. Sony and Nippon Electric (NEC) are both marketing TBCs at around \$15,000. The NEC is about as big as a medium sized refrigerator and claims a 4 line window. A Canadian corporation, Digital Video Systems, is marketing a TBC for \$13,500 which claims to have a 6 line window. The original CVS 501 had a 3 line window. Microtime and CVS still have digital TBCs at the \$12,000 level and they are marketing analog TBCs with reduced capabilities for \$9,500 and \$5,500 respectively.

While they predict greater sophistication in the future for their digital TBCs, none of the TBC marketers was willing to speculate on just when there would be a major price breakthrough. As long as factors like noise and processing speed require digitizing of the sync signal, the process of time base corrections is likely to remain expensive.

Most of the portable color cameras require image enhancement somewhere before the video from the camera reaches the VTR. Many of the cameras incorporate this technology into their circuitry but the necessity for image enhancement systems has given rise to several stand-alone devices which could be useful to producers using low cost video equipment.

Image enhancers increase the apparent resolution of a video signal by more clearly differentiating each scan line. The result of passing most 1/2" and 3/4" tapes through an image enhancer is that the picture looks sharper and the focus seems better.

Unlike TBCs and proc amps, image enhancers function pretty much independently of variations in sync. Corning Glass and Dynasciences were both showing image enhancers for between \$900 and \$1,700.

There was nothing strikingly new to this survey about the proc amps on display. The one noticeable change in all of the above-mentioned image processing equipment is that no longer do manufacturers disdainfully write off helical scan equipment. Everyone now prominently claims that their equipment will work with the worst a 1/2" portapak can offer.

## Goods on Display at NAB

Saticon or Chalnicon.

The Hitachi FP-3030 remains the most impressive looking camera of the one-tube class. It is a completely self-contained unit including the battery. It costs only \$4,400 complete with carrying case, lens and viewfinder. There are no field test results available as yet so its ruggedness remains in question.

**VTRs:** Three new 1" VTRs, none of them standard with the others, were introduced. Ampex, Sony, and Robert Bosch-Fernseh are the manufacturers. All the VTRs use a helical wrap and both the Sony and the Ampex use non-segmented recording methods which eliminate the possibility of color banding in playback. All are designed to meet broadcast technical standards when used with the manufacturers' TBCs.

The performance of all three VTRs was

RCA, Phillips, and IVC, which does not contemplate any conflict of interest between this machine and their existing 900 series 1" broadcast VTR. Fully equipped, this VTR costs about \$60,000. They are also making a portable, 45 pound VTR which RCA plans to sell for \$31,600.

Sony also demonstrated their new \$9,000 broadcast cassette VTR. The things that are supposed to make this machine several thousand dollars superior to Sony's non-broadcast cassette are: new DC motors which allow the tape to be run forward and backward at several speeds, thus facilitating tape searches during editing; a third audio frequency track recorded directly over the video which allows time code to be recorded on the tape without sacrificing one of the two audio tracks; a change in the placement of headswitching — it now sits in

**"For all their intoxication with the tools of the trade, broadcasters seem to have a hard time thinking of something very different to do with all of it."**

indistinguishable from that of 2" quadruplex VTRs. Of the three, the Ampex VPR-1 stood out because of the flawless still and slow motion playback, impossible with a quad. Ampex sales engineers were uncertain as to whether the VPR-1 made tapes compatible with any previous Ampex tape format but finally decided that tapes made on the VR-7900 might be interchangeable. The tape path is the same. The fully loaded VPR-1 package costs about \$55,000.

The Sony 1" BVH-1000 costs about \$45,000 fully equipped. According to sales engineers at Sony, the BVH-1000 uses a "one-and-a-half head system" in which one head records all the video information and another head records the vertical interval signals. The Sony people were guarding their equipment carefully and no literature was available.

The Bosch-Fernseh VTR was very efficient-looking. What you might expect from Germany. Some engineers who saw it suggested that it looked too delicate. In a show situation, considered judgments are hard to make. The Bosch-Fernseh VTR will also be marketed by

blanking, after vertical sync, rather than in video; a connector to feed in 3.58 MHz subcarrier; a new color for the case, grey.

**Image Processing Equipment:** The three main types of equipment in this category are time base correctors, image enhancers and proc amps.

As time base correctors become more technically sophisticated they also become more expensive. Two of the leaders in the TBC field, CVS and Delta Microtime are now marketing TBCs for just under \$20,000. IVC also has a TBC in that price range which is manufactured by the English firm Quantel.

The Microtime 2020 TBC will correct for time base errors of 15 or 20 lines, which is what happens when a portable VTR is swung around or jostled during recording.

This is accomplished by sampling the incoming sync at a very fast rate and using an averaging system for correction. The Microtime people also claim that the 2020 TBC reduces noise by 3dB on signals passed through it. It's a kind of

## Problems Snag Vid Disc Makers

By RAY POPKIN

The "year of the videodisc" is almost half over with no discs on the market. You probably won't see any in your local department store this year, and maybe even next.

The disc hoopla continues, however, with more companies showing, or preparing to show, discs, providing guided tours of disc manufacturing plants, negotiation for software with film companies, and churning up rumors galore.

Other consumer news this issue: heavy marketing of Sony's consumer Betamax video system; growing interest in video projectors; and Zenith's challenge to Japanese TV manufacturers with its new color picture tube.

RCA and MCA-Phillips have been running neck-and-neck in the race to see who gets their videodisc system on the market first. Both were shooting for '76 test-marketing.

RCA now says to look for test-marketing in '77. It also claims it is ahead of MCA-Phillips, although MCA may still have some units out this year.

At any rate, mass marketing is not in the near future for either system.

Zenith is now showing a new optical videodisc system. This could be the most significant new development in the battle over whether an optical or capacitance system will capture the market place.

Many feel only one system can survive, as buyers and program distributors will not tolerate two completely different systems. If Zenith, leading in domestic color TV production, goes optical it should tip the balance in favor of optical discs.

It would mean that CSF-Thompson, MCA-Phillips, Magnavox and Zenith would come up with a standardized system. RCA would be out in the cold with the disappointing Telefunken-Decca system its sole comrade.

But Zenith is also developing a capacitance system. Zenith claims it is working on both systems equally and is not committed to one format or the other. If this is so, why are they showing the optical system and talking about its advantages?

At this point I think the optical laser system is better. There used to be an equal number of advantages and disadvantages with each system. Now some of the problems with the optical system have been resolved.

Optical systems pass a beam of laser light through a disc. This means there is no contact between disc and signal pick-up mechanism. The discs will last longer, as there will be no friction. Most importantly, there is the capacity for still frame and easy random access to desired portions of a program.

The problems the optic system had were two-fold: price and safety. It seemed that the laser components make the system cost significantly more than the capacitance systems.

MCA-Phillips now claims that the laser units, when mass produced, will cost well under \$20 each. This price drop is due to breakthroughs on the part of laser component suppliers.

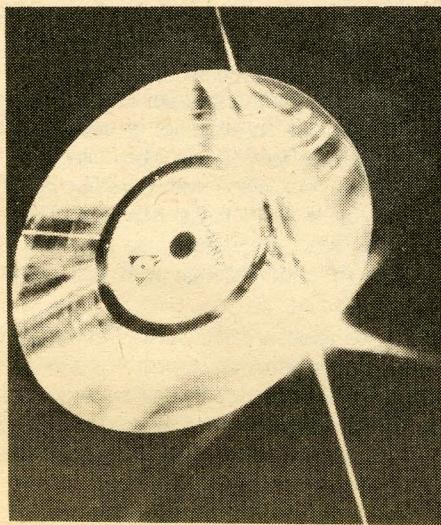
The laser system's lack of a stylus also cuts costs. Although a stylus may be cheaper initially, it needs to be replaced frequently thanks to friction wear and tear.

Some question the safety of the laser, and are concerned about the numerous state laws covering laser use. Jack Findlater, MCA's Disco-vision president, claims federal law will pre-empt state regulation. He says MCA's systems currently meet federal safety requirements.

A safety hazard exists only if the laser were focused directly on a person's skin, according to Findlater. Even then, damage would be negligible since the laser is weak. The power is 100,000 times less than a 100-watt light bulb.

The laser is housed in a sealed box which shuts down the laser when it is opened. The box makes it virtually impossible to focus it on a person.

The American National Standards Institute reports there are about 50,000 of these low power lasers in use. No case of eye damage has been reported. These



MCA's disc gleams: the label reveals the company's distribution thrust — "Airport '75" in your home.

lasers are currently used in super market check-outs, classrooms, and other places.

There is certainly more interest in the optical system. It offers the most possibilities for additional services. Information storage and retrieval and courses for home study are two possibilities.

Sony's home video system is off and walking at many of the local appliance shops in the Washington area and elsewhere. The system features two tuners so that you can be watching one show on the TV that comes with the system and recording another on the half inch cassette VTR.

Why do people buy it when the disc will soon be available at a third of the cost? One answer is that the disc has no recording capability. Low cost cameras available with the Betamax allow those who can afford it to make their own video.

Two things concern me about Betamax. One is the lack of available programming. And two is that yet another new video tape format is out that is compatible with no other.

Zenith, Admiral and other companies are getting into the video projection arena. Previous hopes for quick entry of a flat screen TV have faded leaving video projection the only method of obtaining big screen pictures.

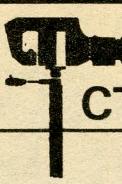
Some systems, like the expensive Advent, focus beams of color on a screen. Others magnify the image of a picture tube. The latter technology is much cheaper and is the way most companies are going.

Zenith has developed a picture tube which is cheaper to build and lighter as well. It uses the same slotted mask system as the current Chromacolor. Many feel this tube could make domestic TVs more competitive with Japanese sets.

### 2 EXCELLENT VIDEO BOOKS

By Don Harwood

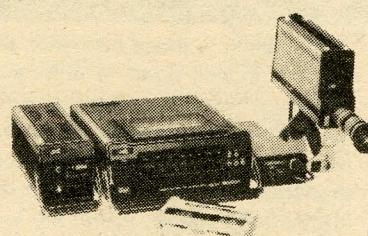
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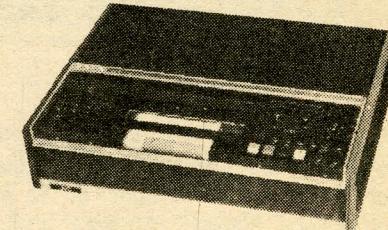
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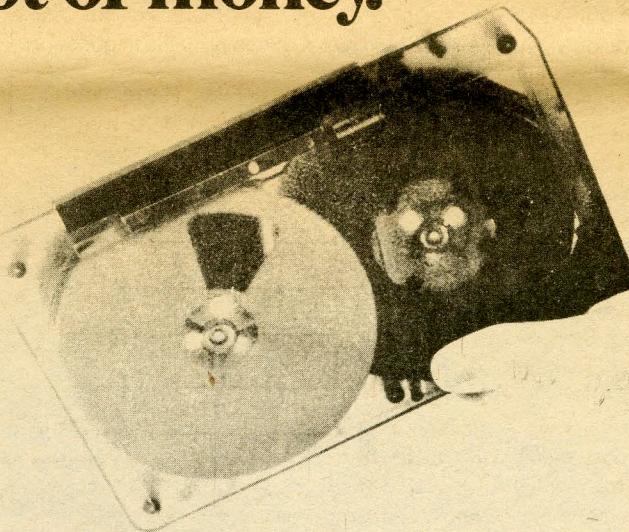
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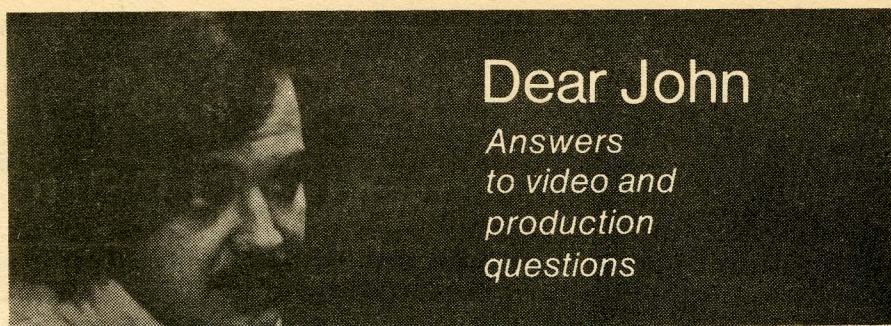
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## Dear John

### Answers to video and production questions

By JOHN TRAYNA

**Q.** If one has shot tape on a portable color system and is approaching an edit, what are the vital elements for quality control of the color signal at the post-production stages? (Consider that the edit will be done on a small format system, not 2", with a processing amplifier, waveform monitor, vectorscope, and colorizer.)

**A.** Recording color images using the new portable systems may not seem to be particularly more complex than black & white, but there are a large number of factors which will be critical during the editing and post-production stages.

Essentially, color can be thought of as a black & white signal with something added. This becomes evident when playing a color tape on a b & w system. Perhaps the best way to answer a question about improving a color signal would be to first break down the signals, both b & w and color, electronically.

In b & w, the signal is comprised of three major and manually variable components. They are *sync*, the basic foundation for the signal; *pedestal*, equivalent to the black level of the picture; and *video*, the visible picture information other than black level.

In addition to these elements, the color signal contains *burst*, a sub-carrier frequency which makes it possible to carry color; *burst phase*, equivalent to hue, i.e., which color; and *chrominance*, equivalent to saturation, i.e., how much color is present and visible. In dealing with both color or b & w signals, each of these elements can be manually controlled when you are using a processing amplifier.

Basically, waveform monitors and vectorscopes are monitoring devices which graphically depict what you see on the television screen. By themselves neither of these devices can effect changes in the signal.

A proc amp however, is designed specifically for this purpose. Without a waveform monitor you must rely only on the changes on the television screen which your eye can detect — obviously not enough for accurate signal and color correction. It is imperative that the proc amp be used to effect changes, and that the waveform monitor be used to monitor these changes as they occur.

Just how far you can change the signal will vary from tape to tape, and system to system. Generally though, the changes you can make should be substantial. Much still depends on the quality of the original footage, however.

One thing to keep in mind when working with color material is that should you wish to include any b & w sections, including black or title segments, you must add a *burst sub-carrier* to the overall signal. Otherwise, the color circuitry in the deck will be confused and start to generate color noise in the form of color snow. Once burst is added, the picture will still appear to be b & w but the deck will see it as color.

This burst-adding process can be achieved any number of ways with different pieces of equipment. Colorizers are the easiest way to do this, but proc amps with built-in color sync generators and SEG's with color background generators are also ways to add burst.

The first thing to do though, whether you are editing in color or b & w is to sit down with an engineer or technician who runs the facility you'll be using and discuss your plans with him/her in as detailed a fashion as possible. They will tell you what's best for you and most easily accomplished with the system at hand.

**Q.** What are the proven advantages of using high density tape?

**A.** That's a tough one because it's still a little early to tell. There just hasn't been enough field testing to be absolutely sure.

There is nonetheless, a visible difference. The picture seems generally sharper and more defined by about 20-30 percent.

High density tape allows for a higher recording voltage which yields an improved signal-to-noise ratio. Therefore, edited tapes mastered on high density stock should generally hold up longer without showing wear due to repeated

head passes.

The real advantage and the best way to use high density stock is in both the original and master. This is of course, impractical for any in-the-field recording. But if you can do this the difference is obvious to the naked eye.

**Q.** What have proved to be the problems, pluses and minuses, of the TRI automated editing system?

**A.** The TRI is by far the best system I have ever worked with short of the CMX computer editing!

The system I use employs two modified Sony AV 8650 1/2" color editing decks. The weakest link in the chain is by far the deck. The 8650 is a \$3000 machine which was never intended to run backwards, which it does when modified for interface with the TRI. The problems we experience are primarily mechanical in nature, for example brake pads and tension.

Our machines see incredibly heavy use, though, approximately 15-20 hours a day, seven days each week. Our down time has been minimal, especially considering we bought one of the first systems of this kind in the country, requiring a lot of trouble shooting to knock the bugs out of an untried system.

Nonetheless, it remains the most painless and easiest editing system of its kind. Preview edits without commitment to tape, single-frame accuracy, and matched-frame edits are just a few of the advantages it offers. Not to mention incredible savings in time and labor.

**If you have any questions regarding video and the production of software, please send them to "Dear John" c/o TELEVISIONS Magazine, and we'll try to answer them for you.**

**"These are serious problems on Archie Bunker, but they're making it into a joke. Don't you get my point, we're laughing at ourselves."**



**TELEVISIONS** visited a three generation working class family in Queens, NY, to watch TV with them.

**The TV Family** is a 1/2 hour color video non-fiction program revealing the story behind the omnipresence of TV in one of the 70 million American television households.

**The TV Family** is available on 2" and all small formats. Shot on a Sony 3/4" system and edited on quad, the program is broadcast quality. Directed by Victoria Costello and Larry Kirkman. Technical Direction by Peter Kirby. Distribution through **TELEVISIONS**.

## CITIZEN ACTION

# NSF Shows Anti-Public Interest in Science For Citizens Programs

*"Balanced Participation" leaves out public*

By ANNE WEISMAN

The National Science Foundation clearly demonstrated its alliance with scientific, engineering and technological constituents, in development of its program, Science for Citizens.

The February NSF proposal, assembled from feedback and reports at various regional meetings, highlighted nine significant options for Science for Citizens:

- registries of scientists and engineers;
- media programs to increase public understanding (e.g., "Advocates" approach television series, broadly based media and educational packages, experimental television and radio programs, development of printed materials such as case studies);
- state-based centers to support public programs in science and technology;
- scientists' and engineers' associates program, in the form of 1-2 year grants;
- internship program for science and engineering undergraduate and graduate students;
- establishment of a national clearinghouse of selected materials with regional branches;
- establishment of regional science service and issue centers;
- forums, conferences and workshops;
- grants to independent journals.

While NSF recognized the necessity of guaranteeing "balanced participation," the means for accomplishing this are not provided within the scope of the program. The basic outline gives scientists, engineers and technologists predominant roles in affecting the program, and hence in formulating public policy. Other interests, namely public advocacy groups, are denied an active role in Science for Citizens.

Although NSF mentions direct funding of public interest groups as "significant options," NSF says "no direct financial assistance is envisioned to public interest groups." The NSF program draft expressed fear that direct funding of public interest groups would support advocacy activities "affecting legislative, administrative or judicial proceedings at other governmental agencies." These are activities the government-funded agency deems "inappropriate to its mission."

At the same time, however, NSF plans to implement Science for Citizens, in part, by pouring money into federal programs. Public Understanding of Science in the Office of Science and Society has been proposed as one media office for the program. NSF has also suggested coordinated efforts with other federal agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

NSF presented its report to Congress February 17. \$300,000 was included in the President's budget to support scientific and technical pilot programs, beginning October 1, 1976.

When Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), head of the National Science Foundation Special Subcommittee presented legislation to the Senate on March 24, authorizing appropriations for NSF in 1977, he made \$5,000,000 available for the Science for Citizens Program. Kennedy's proposal also granted public interest groups a more

significant role, saying, "Public interest groups [are] to acquire necessary technical expertise relating to the scientific and technical aspects of public policy issues . . ."

Kennedy's hope to broaden the Science for Citizens program included a plan to create a 15-person Advisory Committee. The Committee's purpose would be development, planning and implementation of the Science for Citizens Program. Not less than eight of the members would be representatives of public interest groups, minority groups, and women's groups.

Even if Kennedy's proposal—still awaiting final approval and appropriations—makes it through Congress, it faces NSF opposition. One NSF spokeswoman, Barbara Sands, said Kennedy envisions a "much more monumental project than even the Foundation has been prepared for."

*Anne Weismann continues to cover NSF news for TELEVISIONS. This article follows-up on last issue's story.*

## Public TV Up For Ascertainment, License Challenges

WASHINGTON, D.C. — New FCC regulations requiring local ascertainment for public TV broadcasters will open up a can of worms for state educational TV networks.

In a ruling this March the FCC declared that any public TV station having the capability of originating programming—that is, anything more than a mere signal translator—has a responsibility to determine local programming needs.

The ruling, the result of three years' review, is the beginning of FCC reconsideration of its policy towards the highly centralized, yet "public" TV systems owned by different states. State ETVs have previously enjoyed a number of exemptions from 1934 Communications Act requirements.

For example, if state educational networks were responsible under the same obligations commercial TV stations are, they would be guilty of the following:

- Centralized programming, with no determination of local programming needs;
- Duopoly—the overlap of TV signals by stations owned by the same entity;
- Multiple ownership—the FCC currently limits commercial broadcasters to a maximum of seven stations nationally, with a limit of five VHF. State systems range from one to 13 stations; and
- Monopoly programming—state networks often simulcast the same program throughout the state.

The state-owned public TV networks are now undergoing FCC scrutiny, however. Last year the FCC denied the Alabama ETC all nine licenses in its network. This was the first time a renewal was

denied on the basis of race discrimination.

Alabama Citizens for Responsive Public TV have filed for three of the stations, claiming they will be able to provide the local programming the Communications Act requires. How the Commission acts on the Alabama case may set the stage for future license allocations of public TV stations.

FCC reconsideration of the multiple ownership exemption applied to public TV, may also open up state networks to challenges. In 1975 the FCC announced it would handle multiple-ownership on a case-by-case basis. But Commissioners Robinson and Hooks, dissenting, called for a new review, and a new policy, on the problem of multiple ownership.

Additionally, FCC action on the pending Savannah NAACP's license challenge to the Georgia network may well be an indication of how the Commission will act on other license challenges to public TV networks.

## Video Camera Fights Eviction

Last November a video camera helped Erie, Pa. Legal Services represent an indigent tenant fighting eviction from a building owned by a City Councilman.

Councilman Tony Rugare tried to evict the tenant who had begun rent withholding, after rent was raised 200% to \$300 per month.

Video activist and Erie Steering Committee member of Citizens For Cable Awareness in Pennsylvania, Bill Welch got the U.S. District Court's manual on preparing videotapes to use in court. He taped the tenant's house: falling plaster, rotten steps in the basement stairwell—picked apart with a yardstick on camera—a toilet that could be picked up.

The judge in the Erie Common Pleas Court asked Rugare how he could have rented property in that condition.

Rugare claimed the tenant had not taken care of the house, which was structurally unsound. The Councilman also indicated he had not had time to visit the property. Bill Welch's cameras showed the Councilman's bar, which Rugare owned, directly across the street.

*Welch is in the process of becoming involved with a channel leasing operation in a nearby community. He can be reached at 3108 Highland Road, Erie, PA (814) 833-1718.*

## PISA Surveys 1500 Groups On Satellites

The Public Interest Satellite Association (PISA) has initiated a nationwide survey of the communications needs, uses and costs of non-profit organizations. A questionnaire has been mailed to more than 1500 non-profit groups in the United States.

PISA is a recently established group studying satellite communications technology for long-distance use by public interest groups (See "Should People Fight for Satellites," TELEVISIONS, Jan/Feb. 1976).

The purpose of the survey is to make a strong, factual representation on behalf of the non-profit community before the FCC's Joint Industry/Government Committee. The FCC Committee is compiling data about future satellite user-

requirements that will form the basis of U.S. Government policy for the upcoming 1977 and 1979 World Administrative Radio Conferences (WARC).

The full Committee's report is set to be submitted to the FCC by the end of June. Although the results of PISA's survey was made available to the Commission by May 15th. PISA is also seeking formal endorsements from non-profit groups supporting its attempt to ensure that options for the non-profit sector's use of low-cost satellite technology are not foreclosed.

Organizations interested in lending their support should immediately notify PISA, 55 W. 44th St., New York, NY 10036, (212) 661-2540.

## California Cable Conference

SANTA BARBARA — A network of cable television citizen activists was just one result of an April conference here on cable TV in California. A directory of CATV resource people and interest groups, a legislative newsletter, and conference summary were other products of the two-day seminar, the outgrowth of the 1975 Critical Communications Conference at Stanford University.

The two big themes of the conference were public access, and community control and regulation of cable systems. Some 35 people—including city officials, public access producers, cable and communications activists—discussed common problems and solutions.

## Big Brother Goes to Work

(CPF) Plant employees are under complete and total surveillance. Thirty-five television cameras, mounted on movable tracks, monitor the performance of 450 workers. In the monitoring room, a time-study expert keeps a detailed work record on employees suspected of working too slowly, or of talking to other workers too often. Video-tape gives management an "instant replay" of any worker's actions. Travel passes must be issued by a foreman before a worker can go to the storeroom, telephone, or washroom. A canine patrol circles the perimeter of the plant.

A passage from the novel 1984? A scene from a science fiction movie? No, these are the every day, on-the-job conditions for the workers at Blue Bird Food Products on Chicago's South Side. "It's meant to degrade the worker, to turn him into a robot," says Al Tulik, a worker at the plant and a 2nd V.P. of the Amalgamated Meatcutters, the union which represents the plant workers.

Stress and fatigue are taking a tremendous toll on the mental and physical health of the workers. Older workers who may have lost some of their dexterity have trouble working under the tremendous pressures to produce and are especially affected by the watching "eyes." Employees have to take out their anxiety on someone. Too often it's on fellow workers or their families. However, there have been recent incidents of workers attacking foremen.

But the company brags about its system, and other firms are watching it closely to see if they should adopt it. The union officials hope to expose it. As one of them said, "Our problem today might be someone else's problem tomorrow."

*From Chicago Area Committee on Occupational Safety and Health.*

## New 1/2" B&W Programs Set Public TV Precedents

*Video groups in Chicago, L.A. air portraits*

By VICTORIA COSTELLO

Chicago — In mid-May, WTTW-TV broadcast the six-part series, *It's A Living*, to PBS viewers on the consecutive nights of one work week. The series was produced by Chicago-based Videopolis and a cluster of wandering video talent from Lanesville, N.Y.'s Media Bus, TTVT, and others.

These six half-hour shows follow last year's production of Videopolis' hour special, aired several times over midwest PBS stations. The programs all follow the subject and format of Studs Terkel's bestseller, *Working*. Each treats a different angle on work and working from the point of view of those who are doing it.

The new series received \$16,000 in grants from the Illinois State Arts and Humanities Councils. Fifty hours of tape was shot during the four-week production period.

The series was done on half-inch, black and white portapaks. Budget wasn't the only reason leading to the choice of this system instead of a larger format and/or color. There was a need for great shooting mobility and picture depth of field. Artificial lighting had to be avoided when shooting in many dimly lit areas. In a factory and on a garbage-man's early morning route a newvicon low light camera tube replaced the vidicon.

The editing system used for most of the shows was a CMX-300 Quad system (at WTTW). The half-inch tape was dubbed directly with a proc amp. A small part of the editing had to be done from a three-quarter-inch 2850 system, with a proc amp and an image enhancer.

The six programs and their respective crews are:

"Paper Roses" — Shot in an urban retirement home, this show deals with retirement as an aspect of work life. Production: Joel Gold, Maxi Cohen. Edit: Elon Soltes, Tom Weinberg.

"When I was a Worker Like Laverne" — In a Sears Catalog Warehouse, the camera focuses on the plant's workers who are set against an intricate and vast conveyor belt and numbering system. Additional focus is on the relationship between the plant's predominately white managers and black workers. Production: Skip Blumberg, Jane Aaron.

"Paper Wagon" — Features the newspaper loaders for the Chicago Northwestern Railroad. Edit: Nancy Cain, Bart Friedman.

"Barney" — For this show the crew followed Barney Webb through two days of work on his garbage-man's route. Most of the action takes place in various Chicago alleys from 3 to 6 AM. Production: Anda Korsts, Jim Wiseman, Paul Challacombe. Edit: Frank Cavastani, Cindy Neal.

"The Factory" — Shot along the assembly line of the Western Arcadia Rubber products factory, this tape is about the people who work there. Production: Anda Korsts, Jim Wiseman, Paul Challacombe, Scott Jacobs.

The sixth program will either be one on houseworkers or another entitled "The Unemployment Line". Production: Jody Sibert.

Following WTTW's premiere showing, Videopolis plans to make the series available for national PBS distribution. For details contact Videopolis.

Los Angeles — *A Portrait: 54 Years*, directed by Roger and Thomas Klein — a video documentary profiling the grandparents of the tapemakers — is the first work originating on helical scan videotape to ever be produced and aired by an L.A. TV station.

The thirty-minute program aired in late April as the only video work presented on L.A.'s public TV KCET's "Verite" series.

What began for the Kleins as a personal family documentation soon became what they call "a more objective study of the relationship between two elderly people whom after 54 years of marriage still manage to speak to each other."

The tape was shot on half-inch, black and white portapak and edited at KCET on the station's CMX-300 quad system. Support from "Verite's" producer, Taylor Hackford, reportedly facilitated L.A. TV's first independent video entry.

But the Kleins point out, "The ice has barely been broken in this area, . . . despite L.A.'s relatively high level of independent video activity." The major problem, they said of their recent experience at KCET, was in overcoming the skepticism of both broadcast programmers and technicians towards the integrity and feasibility of these half-inch projects.

For further info: Roger and Thomas Klein, 1627 Crescent Drive, Venice, CA 90291.

## Video Festivals in New York, Portland

The fourth annual Women's Video Festival is scheduled over three weekends this June (10th-27th). Showings will be held Thurs. through Sun. each evening at 8 p.m. The Women's Interart Center, 549 W. 52nd St. in New York City, will again house this showcase of video work in which women played major roles. Each Friday evening will be dedicated to a retrospective of favorites of past festivals, different each weekend. Thurs., Sat. and Sun. night programs will be the same each weekend.

Festival coordinator Susan Milano reports that over one hundred entries have been received. Jurors will choose a variety of documentaries, video art and video installation pieces from the entries. Among those to be featured at the festival are: "Forest of Canes", a piece on footbinding in Old China by Spectra of Washington, D.C.; "When I Was a Worker Like Laverne", one of the "It's a Living" series from Lanesville, N.Y.'s Media Bus; a new work by Shiekego Kubota titled, "My Father"; "The TV Family" by Victoria Costello and Larry Kirkman; and "Raster's Muse", a short piece which synthesizes drawings by Rodin to create "animated" images of Isadora Duncan.

*Northwest Film and Video Festival* will be held August 13-15 and 20-22 at the Northwest Film Study Center, Portland Art Museum. Film and video artists living in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, British Columbia, and Alaska are invited to submit a maximum of two works of any length in 16mm, 8mm or 8mm film or in 1/2" or 3/4" videotape, produced since September, 1975.

Cash and lab processing awards valued at \$100 each will be made to five works. Festival judge will be Ernest Calenbach, editor of *Film Quarterly*.

Deadline for entries is July 30, 1976. Additional information and entry forms are available by contacting: Northwest Film and Video Festival, Northwest Film Study Center, Portland Art Museum, S.W. Park and Madison, Portland, Oregon 97205, (503-226-2811).

## Refocus on Iowa

Iowa — The University of Iowa recently held its annual Refocus Spring Festival, the largest student-run film, photography and video event in the country. In addition to the regular exhibition/competition of visual works, special events at the festival included a premiere showing of several chapters of the twelve-part series, "The History of TV", produced by TTVT for broadcast in the fall. Also of video interest were speakers Cindy Neal of Videopolis, Virginia Kassel, producer of "The Adams Chronicles," and Allen Rucker from TTVT.

## Godard's Latest Mixes Film, Video

*Number Two*, Godard's latest, is a political erotic soap opera about how working affects three generations of a French working class family. Shot 90 percent on color video with a stationary camera, it is an exploration of what video can be about.

The video image retains its integrity and characteristic shape, never filling the screen, being used as an element in the film. Size and placement on the film screen are constantly changing. Multiple video images, actual monitors and live TV are used in a "control room."

A film about, among other things, video, bridging the gap between them, and using video as it has never been used in film before. See it if you can.

## Dreaming (And Taping) Sacred Ants

San Francisco — Ant Farm, the producers of "Media Burn" and "The Eternal Frame", is off again, this time to Australia. The videomakers join an exploration of a remote area which not only contains the largest uranium deposit in the country, but is also a sacred religious ground, jealously guarded by the aborigines who inhabit it. According to legend, the native tribe has been ordered by an ancient species of Green Ants to protect this area as a "sacred dreaming place."

Ant Farm, along with students of the New South Wales Institute of Technology, will employ their architectural talents to design an exhibition vehicle. They'll exhibit tape, as well as take part in the video documentation of the exploration.

As Ant Farm takes off for their month in the wilderness, I'm left visualizing tribesmen peacefully entranced in front of a monitor image of Jackie crawling over the black convertible hood that fateful day in Dallas.

## VTR Airs 13 New Shows by Independents and Packages Past Series

WNET's *Video and Television Review* (VTR) series entered its second season this April with 13 weekly programs by video artists and documentarians scheduled to air through the summer. The Sunday night series began April 25 with an overview showing of videoart done at NET's Resident Artists Lab, Boston's WGBH-TV and S.F.'s KQED-TV.

The second program featured an hour-long, new work by Ed Emshwiller entitled "Family Focus." Emshwiller combined synthesized and colorized portapak tape, still photos and home movies with a narration written and read by his wife Carol, to create their family portrait.

Carol Brandenberg, VTR's co-producer with David Loxton, reports they strived to present a balance of videoart and documentary in this year's series. Its total budget is \$55,000, from the N.Y. State Arts Council.

Of the 13 programs, few came to VTR as complete acquisitions. For acquired completed programming producers received \$10 per minute. Several shows received an average of \$3,000 or \$4,000 each in the form of production and/or post production support from NET. One acquisition is "A Portrait: 54 Years" by Thomas and Roger Klein of Los Angeles.

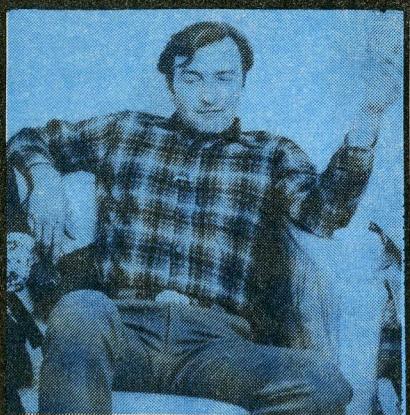
In VTR's live video category, is a show from Lanesville, N.Y.'s Media Bus. The program should include some of their material from the "It's a Living Series" presented in their customary Saturday night "live in Lanesville" format.

Two independent documentary producers were brought in to carry out special program ideas generated by the VTR series' own executive producers. "The Electronic Couch" produced by Phillip Perlman and Ruth Bonomo was one special. The producers used an examination of their own psyches and their working relationship as an approach to the subject of the therapeutic uses of video in psychotherapy in the N.Y. area.

A survey of community video centers will make up two or three of the programs. Visits by independent producer Candy Harper, formerly with Grass Roots Video in Aspen, Colorado, to video centers around the country will be documented. She and her crew visited Broadside Video in Tennessee, a center in Austin, Texas, and similar groups in San Francisco, upstate New York and Minneapolis. The shows focus on relationships between community video groups and their regional cable and broadcast TV systems.

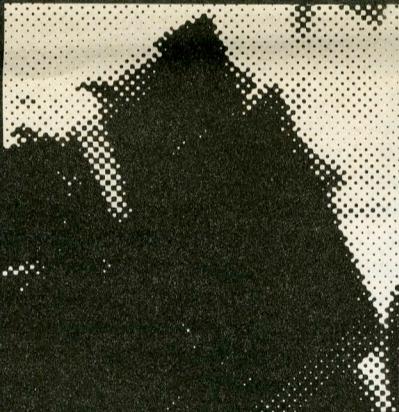
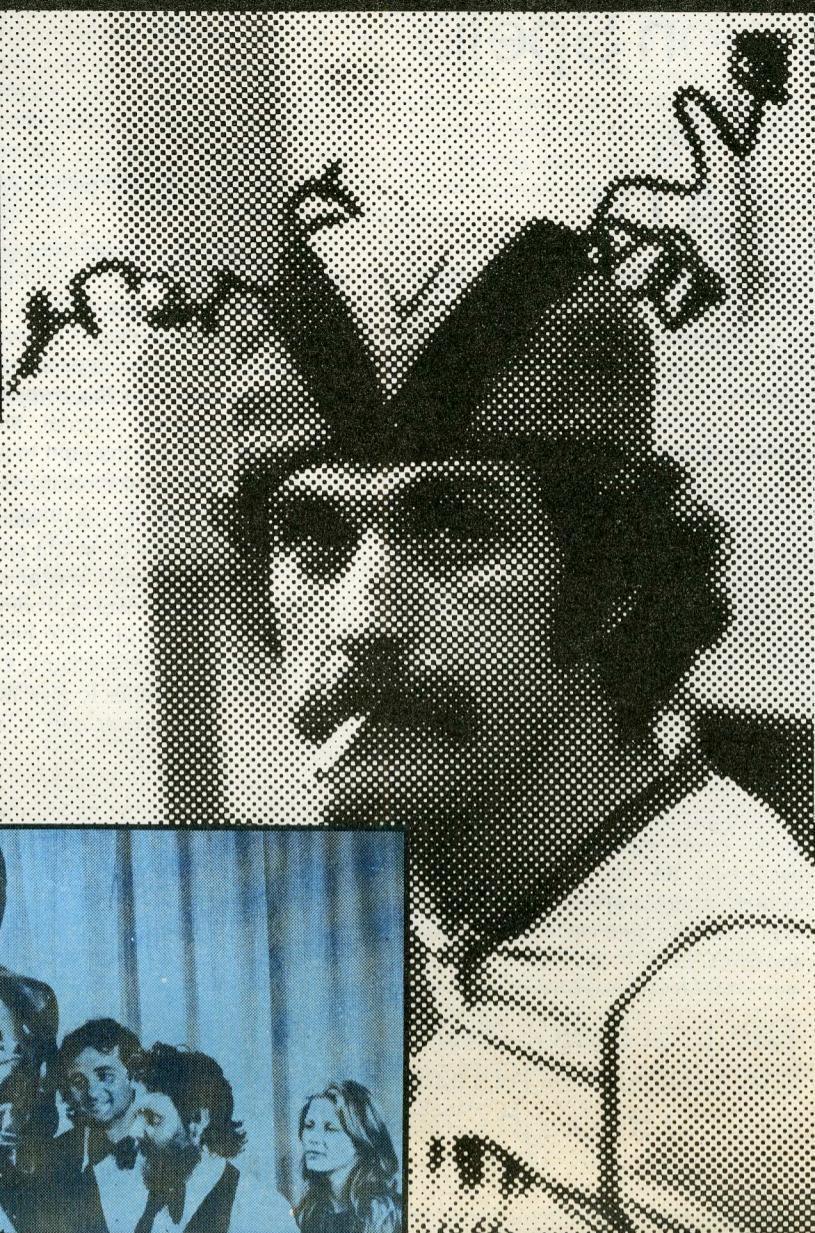
Other programs packaged specifically for airing within the VTR series include: *CRT: Cathode Ray Theater*, three works by Tom DeWitt; selected video works of Bill Wegman, intercut with an interview by Russell Conner; three works by Stephen Beck, including "Cycles" and a new work created at NET's Lab; and a two-part show on gallery and museum video performances and installations produced by Russell Conner, head of The Cable Arts Foundation.

Thirteen of last year's VTR series are also being marketed as a package for distribution by WNET, through the national PBS system and in small formats, through Electronic Arts Intermix, N.Y.



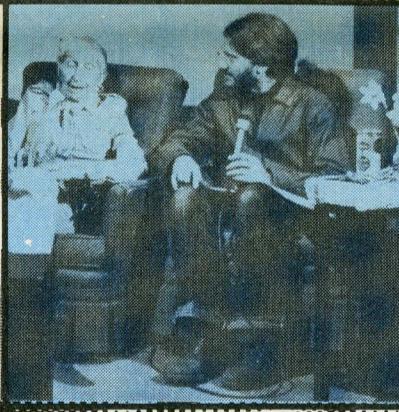
Richard Lebedeff, *The TV Family* father, watches himself watching television on playback at the end of a day's shooting.

His Master's Video — Wegman and canine companion.



Tinseltown hopefuls from TVTV talk to Oscar.

Extraterrestrial anthropologist Howard K. Martian reports strange earthling rituals to cable viewers



Taking home movies a step further, Skip Blumberg interviews his grandma for Lanesville — "Probably the World's Smallest TV Station."



Chinese senior citizens demonstrate and Downtown Community TV videotapes — the making of grassroots programming for public TV.

At the console: Somerville, Mass. cable producer

GRAPHIC BY SKIP JOHNSTON

# Living Video

# Copyright Revision Spells Change for Artists, Broadcasters, CATV

## Compulsory license and Copyright Tribunal

By REBECCA MOORE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Big changes are in store for cable TV owners, broadcasters, and copyright holders when, and if, the copyright revision bill makes it through Congress this year. Passed 97-0 by the Senate last February, the complex bill, which affects hundreds of special interests, is currently in mark-up in the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties, and the Administration of Justice.

A few changes affecting TV people:

- For the first time, CATV operators will pay royalty fees to broadcasters under a compulsory license system;
- Public TV will have compulsory license to use copyrighted non-dramatic literary, musical, pictorial and graphic works — the first time literary works have ever come under compulsory license (compulsory license means someone can use copyrighted material for a set fee without the author's permission);
- A copyright royalty tribunal will be established with the power to review and revise royalty payment rates;
- Copyrighted electronic broadcasts, like news programs, can be taped off the air for the purposes of scholarship and research without license or royalty payment by the user;
- The term of copyright will be extended from the current 28-plus-28 years, to life-plus-fifty years.

The first major overhaul of copyright law since 1909, the revision bill has been wending its way through Congress for over a decade. Section 111, affecting cable TV, is partly responsible for the delay, as technological developments, court cases, FCC and OTP rules pushed and pulled at the legislative committees considering cable.

### Contradictory policy

Two Supreme Court decisions — *Fortnightly* and *TelePromTer* — held that CATV systems were simple re-broadcasts, not new performances, of copyrighted material. As such they were not liable for copyright royalty payments under the 1909 law. The decisions, coupled with FCC inability to make a satisfactory policy on the exclusivity of broadcasters' rights (the Commission came out with contradictory rulings every two years or so in its attempt to protect the broadcasters' interests) made clear the need for a new law commensurate with the new technology.

A push from the Copyright Office, and the broadcasters, forced the pro-cable Senate Judiciary Committee to include CATV in its revision bill. As early as 1965 the Copyright Register declared "We believe that what community antenna operators are doing represents a performance to the public of the copyright owner's work. We believe," the Register continued, "not only that the performance results in a profit which in fairness the copyright owner should share, but also that, unless compensated, the performance can have damaging effects upon the value of the copyright."

Briefly, the new law says: a cable system does not have to worry about copyright liability for a particular program if all the signals he is carrying comply with

FCC regulations, and he pays a set fee into the Copyright Office every three months.

### Fees and fights

The Senate passed a CATV fee schedule set as a percentage of gross receipts, with smaller systems paying a proportionately smaller share.

But the House Subcommittee, bowing under intense pressure from the National Cable Television Association, the Motion Picture Association, and the National Association of Broadcasters, revised the rates so that royalty income will come primarily from distant signals, i.e., signals a cable system is not required to carry. Small cable systems, including those owned by the top 25 MSOs (multiple system operators) will pay less when their gross income is between \$80,000 and \$160,000.

## The first major overhaul of copyright law since 1909 has been winding its way through Congress for over a decade... Will it get passed this year?

But the fights between the broadcasters and the cable industry won't end with passage of the copyright revision bill if the subcommittee adopts, as is likely, an amendment allowing judicial review of copyright royalty tribunal decisions. Under the Senate bill, the tribunal will have authority to review and revise the compulsory license rates for the music, jukebox, broadcasting and cable industries, but its decisions were subject to Congressional veto.

If the new provision goes through, it will open up tribunal decisions on cable TV to consideration by the U.S. Court of Appeals.

"This means they can litigate and litigate, and delay and delay," grumbled one broadcaster speaking of the cable industry.

But broadcasters will probably be gaining the right to sue cable TV for damages, and may, if the provision goes through, get a virtual ban on any kind of alteration or substitution for re-transmitted signals.

FCC regulations currently prohibit signal alteration or commercial substitution. The subcommittee will merely be putting these regulations into statutory language. "The philosophy is that it's a concession to the broadcasting interests," said the subcommittee counsel. "It's as simple as that."

Total estimated royalties from cable TV, as provided by the Senate bill, come to about \$8.7 million, with House amendments providing about \$250,000 less. The \$8 million pie will then be divided among all the copyright holders: broadcasters, authors, music composers and publishers, and motion picture makers.

### Liberty or license?

One of the most controversial provisions of the revision bill is the Mathias Amendment, Section 118. The Mathias Amendment provides public TV with com-

pulsory license to use a variety of copyrighted works.

For the first time in U.S. copyright history, literary works would come under compulsory license. "This is a foot in the door to government control," said Copyright Register's Barbara Ringer, who feels the Mathias Amendment treads on too many toes.

The main fear — expressed by everyone from broadcasters to song writers to book publishers and authors — is the loss of control Section 118 embodies. Although the public broadcasters will have to compensate the owner for the use of copyrighted material, the copyright owner will lose the right to say "no" to public TV, if the provision is adopted?

Sen. Cranston (D-Cal.), along with Senators Humphrey (D-Minn.) and Buckley (C-N.Y.), introduced one amendment to eliminate literary works from compulsory licensing. When this amendment was withdrawn under pressure, Cranston introduced still another to give the copyright holder veto power over unlicensed use of his/her works.

Arguing for the amendment, Cranston said "When Congress establishes a set of legal rights, it has created a property interest, and the fifth amendment applies, and I now plead the fifth. It states: nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation."

But opponents of Section 118 met a powerful foe in Senator Pastore (D-R.I.), the public broadcasters' most ardent Congressional advocate. Pastore first claimed public TV had compromised, since it had never before paid any royalties. Then he denounced using tax money to pay royalties to "the multimillion dollar Hollywood giants." Then he pleaded poverty of the public TV systems.

But Pastore finally responded to Cranston's plea on the fifth amendment by saying "To answer that, within the scope of the Constitution, the Congress giveth and the Congress taketh away."

### Copyright royalty tribunal

While frequently "taketh-ing away," in the case of setting royalty rates, the Congress is giving responsibility to a copyright royalty tribunal. In an attempt to ameliorate the conflict between copyright holders and copyright users — the authors and the public — and to forestall the kind of decade-long haggling Congress has been through, the revision bill establishes a completely new office.

The copyright royalty tribunal will have the power to review and revise rates periodically. Although Congress will retain final veto power over all tribunal recommendations, the tribunal will actually determine rates after reviewing the facts.

The tribunal provision has become a dumping ground for any problem Congress can't solve right now. All rates that public broadcasters will have to pay under Section 118, have been thrown in the lap of the copyright royalty tribunal, since no provision exists for assigning royalty fees. CATV royalty payments will also come up for review by the tribunal.

The most controversial part of the copyright royalty tribunal is how often rates come up for review. Review generally means rate increase. The interests liable for copyright royalty payments are anxious to postpone the inevitable.

### Vanderbilt unvanquished

The House Judiciary Subcommittee just concluded working out an amendment providing for limited unlicensed use of commercial TV broadcasts.

The amendment grew out of a court case involving Vanderbilt University's taping of news programs off the air. Most subcommittee members did not want to curtail university taping since it has been the only source of copyrighted TV news programs.

In an attempt to prohibit the commercial use of such tapes, the subcommittee voted the limitation that the tapes be used only for scholarship and research.

### Will Congress pass?

The Copyright revision bill contains numerous provisions affecting many other interests in addition to TV: libraries, schools, teachers, musicians, record companies, broadcasters, and so on.

But the "fountainhead" of the copyright revision bill, according to the copyright register, is the extension of the term of copyright to life-plus-fifty. This extension, which brings the U.S. into line with international copyright standards, gives the artist, and family, a much longer period of control — in consideration of the increased life-span of most people, and the longevity of art works in modern society.

While there are still a few controversies the House has to settle, the biggest question right now is: will the bill become law this session? The answer is yes from all sides: the copyright register, the House subcommittee chairman, the lobbyists affected by the bill. But in an increasingly election year-influenced Congress, copyright revision this year is not necessarily a foregone conclusion.

## World Radio Policy To Be Set In 1979

By STEVE SCHAFER

Planning and organizing is already underway for the 1979 World Administrative Radio Conference (WARC) held in Geneva by arrangement of a specialized U.N. agency, the International Telecommunications Union.

This is the first "General WARC" since the advent of communications satellites. Preparations for the WARC here in the U.S. are setting the boundaries for future debates regarding who will use satellites for communication, and at what costs (See *TELEVISIONS*, Vol. 4, No. 1: "Should the People Fight for Satellites?").

WARCs are held periodically, at times attended by more countries than belong to the U.N. itself, for the purpose of laying groundrules for international cooperative use of the radio spectrum. The results are published in a thick volume of tables, rules, and appendices containing technical information, often called the "Red Book." The 1979 WARC, unlike most of the previous, more limited meetings, opens the entire "Red Book" up for revision — the first time in 20 years.

WARC preparations are well underway in this country. By June 1, every major communications industry submitted estimates of predicted growth to the year 2000 to the Federal Communications Commission.

These estimates are used to support projections of spectrum requirements, i.e., what government licenses for radiating electromagnetic energy — at what frequencies, at what power, and at what

## CABLE TV

# Closed Circuit Cable Questioned in Queens

By GLENN RALSTON

time — the major communications service industries will require for their growth. The companies, trade associations, and other groups involved include familiar giants of telephone, broadcast radio and television, and less familiar parties representing the interests of land mobile radio, aeronautical radio, marine radio, citizens band radio and amateur radio.

A steering committee of the FCC, representing non-government users of licensed spectrum, and the Office of Telecommunications Policy in the White House, representing all government, including military, users of licensed frequencies, meet this summer to begin the long process of advising the State Department on U.S. positions regarding international telecommunications policy for the 1979 WARC.

Preliminary submissions of spectrum requirements were submitted to the FCC's steering committee on February 1 by 16 advisory committees, composed for the most part of industry engineers. A long and complicated tabulation of these projections have been compiled and released as a Public Notice by the FCC on March 22, and were published in the *Federal Register*.

A similar process of compiling the needs of federal agencies is underway by several specially established bodies under the little-known Interagency Radio Advisory Committee (IRAC). Besides the defense agencies, federal users of licensed spectrum include the Park Service, the National Science Foundation, NASA — almost every government agency. Their projected needs to the year 2000 are not yet available publicly.

For years, an examination of the area of frequencies known technically as 100 MHz-1215 MHz has continued. The purpose; to find the U.S. government an amount almost equivalent to 17 television channels for future use. Since this area includes some FM radio, TV channels 7-13 and all UHF-TV channels, broadcast lobby groups and the networks have mounted an intensive campaign to protect existing television allocations from any interference.

This area of the spectrum is widely desired by private companies for uses as varied as communicating voice and computer data to off-shore oil rigs, private telephone service for passengers riding Amtrack trains and commercial airliners, and additional FM-aural radio service. Even radio astronomers claim they need interference-free bands to "listen" to cosmic broadcasts to aid in determining the composition and behavior of stars and galaxies.

WARC proceedings involve a complicated group of committees inside and outside government. Everyone involved expects negotiations to be long and difficult, to resolve conflicting demands and desires of both the developed and the developing countries.

U.S. communications industries tie their continued growth and survival to the outcome of WARC decisions, as they are implemented domestically in the 1980s by the FCC and the Office of Telecommunications Policy. These industries are laying the groundwork now for later proceedings.

WARC may also be an opportunity for a wider public examination of the way the public resource of the "electromagnetic frequency spectrum" is managed and licensed by the government and the industries which rely on such licenses for their profits.

**Steve Schaffer** is a recent graduate of the George Washington University Law School. He has attended previous WARC meetings, and has consulted to the D.C. City Council on cable TV.

old fashioned grassroots organizing and plain hard work, the Eastern Queens group is exposing the limitations, the economic ripoff, and the bureaucratic unresponsiveness of the current proposal in a positive fashion.

If the Queens Association should be successful in their efforts, perhaps Manhattan's block associations, political clubs and Community Boards will see that they too can demand that the unmet promises in the Manhattan franchise for local origination, real public access, and service to institutions be fulfilled. That seems a fair demand for the 66 percent increase (from \$6 to \$10) in subscriber rates that they have been paying over the past couple of years.

**Glenn Ralston** is a city planner and has been telecommunications advisor to a number of local and national organizations.

## L.A. Cable Study: Will the City Get Wired?

By BOB JACOBSON

The L.A. Board of Public Utilities and Transportation (PUT), reacting to the impending expiration of Los Angeles's cable television franchises in 1977, has initiated creation of a "master plan for cable communications."

PUT's cable study was prompted in no small part by the FCC's failure to set a national cable policy, as well as by a D.C. Court of Appeals' decision that states and cities have the right to regulate the more important intrastate functions of cable television. The FCC has opposed local regulatory autonomy ever since propounding its 1972 regulations for the new medium. It had actually aided the cable industry in its effort to use cable for the profitable purpose of showing pay-movies at rates set by the cable industry itself.

Several PUT staff members have been given full-time responsibility for studying cable and a communications consultant was hired. The staff has been assisted, actually, instructed, by citizen representatives of the Los Angeles community.

The citizens are organized into five task forces: health services; industry and commerce; intra- and inter-government; education; and an oversight body, the Citizens Task Force. The latter, with responsibility for final recommendations to the Board, is divided into several study teams, including citizen information needs, franchising and districting, ownership, and regulation.

The study team on Citizen Information Needs has so far recommended: near-universal accessibility of cable in Los Angeles, to create better educational opportunity; efficiencies in the transmitting of information rather than the transportation of things; greater cultural diffusion — very important in the immense place called "L.A.;" and, the enhancement of public participation in City activities.

The Franchising Study Team decided the City should be completely wired, so that citizens could get franchises to channels, rather than the right to install

"hardware." Local people and enterprises could then put their money into providing services, rather than building expensive cable plants.

Since these channel franchises would be allocated by planning districts designated by the Planning Department in 1973, local groups could vote by district to support programming to meet their particular needs. Some channels would be held open as citywide channels — education, municipal activities, and perhaps some commerce and public programming. In no case, however, would the system be in the business of rebroadcasting regular television signals. This would keep out the FCC and allow private cable television companies to continue to supply pay-television where and when required.

Important questions have yet to be considered, though. For instance, would electronic banking services put smaller local banks without channels of their own, out of business by making it more convenient to do business with the larger banks? If so, would it be even harder for citizens in some parts of the City to get badly needed loans, since larger banks would prefer larger customers? Should channels therefore be reserved for local businesses?

Most importantly, will local people have the ability to discriminate wisely among competing services wishing to have access to their communities? As now conceived, the franchising districts could have control over local access by outside vendors. But citywide decisions could also be made by an elective body with representatives from the various districts. In any case, the potential benefits to the City will probably outweigh the potential risks.

These problems leave the Ownership Study Team in a bind. At a special meeting of the Citizens Task Force, the four cable operators who presently serve Los Angeles — Theta, King, Sammons, and Palos Verdes (Times-Mirror) — indicated they could not possibly extend their services to the whole City. They claimed they might have to close down the plants now operating unless unexpected revenues were available.

The Ownership Study Team is seriously considering mixed or public ownership of the proposed cable communications system, if it can be shown that real economies could result for the people of the City. These economies must be demonstrated, because the cost of the system might run to the tens or even hundreds of million dollars.

One complication in the cable study is Pacific Telephone's request to be allowed a free hand in the local market. The Bell System company claims that its optical fiber technology will be available in 10 years, thus making obsolete any installed coaxial cable.

Cable operators and specialized common carriers, with most of the latter having main stations in Los Angeles, have been joined by commercial firms challenging the service currently provided by Bell, however.

Public meetings occurred throughout March. The Citizens Task Force then began the arduous process of evaluating all of the reports from the various task forces and study teams.

It will now have to draw up a "cable master plan" in time for public hearings by 1977 — before the PUT Board and the City Council decide how Los Angeles will deal with cable.

**Bob Jacobson** is co-chairman of the Ownership Study Team of the L.A. Citizens Task Force.

## SF Bay Area Fights For and Against Higher CATV Rates

By ELLEN ROBERTS

• The San Francisco Board of Supervisors denied a request for an increase in the subscriber rates for local cable television service. Objections were based on a number of issues.

Several members felt the rate analyst of the city attorney's office had not developed an adequate model for evaluating the merits of the increase. Others felt that according to the terms of the franchise, the company did not have grounds for an increase without providing additional services. Because of the 1977 compliance deadlines, the exact date of the expiration of the franchise and the status of the system are also unclear.

After the Board holds hearings on the report of the CATV Task Force later this spring, a new franchise and ordinance may be developed which would include a set procedure for handling rate requests.

• For the last two years, the fate of Berkeley cable television has been in limbo. The company requested a rate increase, which the city denied. The company then refused to pay the franchise fee and ceased marketing subscriptions.

Hearings on the rate increase began April 20, 1976. In preparation, the city commissioned a technical study and established a policy commission. Among the issues being considered is revocation of the franchise.

• The cable company operating in several communities in Marin County has requested a rate increase and specifically tied a portion of the increase to providing an access studio which would be available at no charge. The remainder of the increase is attributed to inflation and general cost of living increases.

Approximately 60% of the communities have agreed to the increase to date. The company has been successful in getting local video producers to lobby for the rate increase. They have developed a working relationship with groups and individuals trying to promote the community use of cable television.

**Ellen Roberts is a cable activist in San Francisco.**

## Communities Organize Against CATV Rate Increases

By BOB MATORIN

After close to a year of hearings, investigations and delays, the Massachusetts CATV Commission has granted Warner Cable of Eastern Mass. a 50% rate increase affecting six Greater Boston communities. The decision, raising the monthly service charge from \$5 to \$7.50 was strongly opposed by subscribers and has led to increased organizing efforts around cable.

Two of the six voting commissioners opposed the increase. Interestingly they were also the only two attending a public hearing and exposed to subscriber complaints of poor service, substandard reception and contract violations.

The commission, under cable pressure

to grant a quick increase, had previously given Warner an extra \$1.80 temporary increase pending a final decision. The Somerville Producer Group organized a successful withholding campaign, charging the increase was illegal.

The group is now concentrating on returning final say over cable rates to the cities and towns. Home rule petitions have been passed by city councils in five communities and will go before the sixth before being presented to the legislature. Municipalities had ultimate rate setting powers until November 1974 when the state commission voted itself power of appeal under a statutory option.

Meanwhile, the City of Somerville has announced it will appeal the rate decision in superior court. The city may be joined in the suit by other affected communities.

The rate increase has also spurred efforts to increase community control over cable development. In Somerville, a citizens Cable Advisory Board, decimated by resignations and a firing, has been reconstituted and reorganized. After a local rate hearing in Winthrop, citizens formed a committee to investigate cable's possibilities which has recommended that a permanent advisory board be formed. The Winthrop group is also interested in stimulating both public access and local origination programming.

A recent FCC decision requiring public access in all systems of more than 3500 subscribers is being used to open-up access in five grandfathered communities. The Tri-City Council for Children, serving Everett, Medford, and Malden, will soon air its first tape — a program on foster care and adoption. Chelsea residents are also planning tapes on a variety of subjects.

The rate decision demonstrated to subscribers the need for an area-wide coalition to represent community interests. Now in the planning stages, this coalition will link existing organizations and individuals in the six-city area.

**Bob Matorin works with the Somerville Producers' Group.**

## Atlanta TV to Satellite

A common carrier satellite system will carry a television station's programming nationwide for the first time this summer.

Atlanta WTCG-TV programs will be relayed by Southern Satellite Systems to an RCA Satcom satellite 22,500 miles above the equator. The programs will be picked up by subscribing CATV stations.

Scientific-Atlanta, which provides satellite earth terminals, began delivering receiving terminals to CATV operators last year. The company expects it will install over 50 terminals by mid-summer.

The earth terminal consists of a 10-meter diameter parabolic antenna, together with transmitting and receiving electronics required for two channels of video programming.

The earth terminal will also be used to receive some away-game sports shows by Atlanta's hockey, baseball and basketball teams.

## CATV Hearings This Summer

WASHINGTON, D.C. — House Subcommittee on Communications hearings on amending the 1934 Communications Act to include cable TV regulations be-

gan this May. Legislation coming out of the hearings may well adopt, or amend, current FCC regulations on cable, and put those regulations into Federal statute.

Since most subcommittee members are new to communications issues — Representative Lionel Van Deerlin has been subcommittee chairman two months — the hearings are primarily informational, with representatives of many interests testifying.

According to one reporter on the scene, subcommittee staff is more knowledgeable on CATV than the Members of Congress, and a recent staff report on cable forms the basis for draft legislation.

The hearings will continue throughout the summer.

## Leased Access: Stepping Stone To the Bigtime?

Public access is nearing its fifth birthday in New York. As a gift to itself, access producers, and the city, Manhattan Cable on March 1 launched the first "public leased channel" in the nation.

There are two major differences that set a leased channel apart from existing public access operations; a producer has to pay for time on the cable, and advertising is permitted.

At present, channel space is leased on a contract basis for a 13-week period at \$50 per hour. The original projections were for 7 hours of programming a week leading up to 13 hours a week by the end of the first quarter. Currently in its third month of cablecasting, Channel J is running 48 hours of programming a week



with 15 producers waiting to sign on.

According to rules put forth by the Office of Franchises in New York and followed by the cable system, the channel is available on a "first-come, first-served non-discriminatory basis" to anyone. The restrictions are that the programming be substantially produced in New York City and that it be screened by the cable company in order to determine whether it is "objectionable" by its standards. This has already proved to be a major issue.

The above figures indicate there definitely is a market for leased access. On a yearly basis, 48 hours of programming a week will generate \$124,800 in revenues, not a staggering sum by cable standards.

But this appears to be only the tip of the iceberg. The company's local origination channel is being sold at \$200 per hour and there are already many takers. In addition, a second channel is being considered for allocation to leased access.

The economics tend to indicate that from a management perspective access can no longer be considered merely a legal necessity with marginal benefits. Instead, it is a real income-producing entity, a fact that Manhattan Cable is not overlooking.

Access, consequently, is now being considered by management, as well as by producers, as a real stepping stone to the "big time." This is especially true in New York where more schemers are scheming than anywhere on earth.

Although each specific case is a bit different, the general thinking is that an idea formulated and tested on the free access channel can then pass over to Channel J with sponsorship and a higher production value. If the program continues to build an audience, it's then onto the local origination channel, which has more prestige due to its higher costs. From there, full steam ahead to syndication or commercial television, the ultimate goal of most leased channel producers.

There is no doubt that the concept is popular, but who is producing what for whom? Currently there are 47 producers putting together 52 shows for the total of 48 hours in programming.

As far as viewer response is concerned, the "Big Giveaway" is the big winner. On the show, done live, simple questions are asked of the viewers. Whoever calls in first with the correct answer wins a prize.

The program has been so successful that the first three times the show was on, the entire telephone exchange overloaded. The telephone company estimates that it takes about 5,000 simultaneous telephone calls to blow an entire exchange. With 80,000 total subscribers, perhaps as many as 10 percent of the potential audience was watching the program.

"Midnight Blue," a late night softcore porn program, has generated the most attention. The hour long program, produced in color by Alex Bennett with the backing of Screw Magazine, was canned. Its contract was cancelled by Manhattan Cable, and it is now denied access to the system. Nobody is talking about the specifics of the case but it appears that "Midnight Blue" will become the precedent setting "test case" to determine who has final jurisdiction over censorship of material on the access channels.

Because other programs are still in the early stages of development, it is difficult to easily categorize them. Several trends are becoming clear, however. Much of the advertising is being "positioned" for the same audience as the shows, so that the distinction between program and advertising is becoming increasingly blurred. A program on travel is produced and sponsored by a travel agency, a health show is brought to you by a health spa and so on.

Ad type programs are also appearing. TeleDate, a video dating service, is putting people on the cable. If viewers want to meet them, they have to pay a fee to TeleDate.

The role of the producer is also becoming clear. Joel Siegel is now producing four primarily talk shows for the leased channel. He brings an idea and talent together, leases production facilities to produce the show, then sells it directly to sponsors.

As the concept of leased channel access defines itself, an entirely new attitude surrounding the access principle appears to be growing. There are no news, public affairs or purely community oriented programs now being cablecast because there are no willing sponsors. Consequently programs are being formulated and access staff energies are going with the commercially viable shows produced by people with a strong business "hustle" orientation.

It's too early to categorically state the direction that leased access will go. It's here as a one-year experiment, but if use is any measurement of success, Channel J is here to stay.

# Broadcasting: Alternative To the Distribution Problem

## Lessons from alternative radio

By TOM THOMAS

It's time for the development of alternative television stations, not just alternative programming.

The major obstacle to alternative stations is not lack of money, nor is it lack of programming. The main barrier is the lack of people who want to do *broadcasting* as opposed to video.

The alternative video movement has concentrated on the production of programs, but not on the creation of channels for mass distribution. Distribution has relied on "other people's" systems. The price: limited access to a limited audience.

Starting a station isn't easy. Most discouraging is the enormous investment of time. The three distinct stages — organizing and planning, getting an FCC license, and building — each take a minimum of six months. Often a year or longer is usually the case. That means a two or three-year commitment to the station before ever turning on the transmitter.

Running a station is very different from doing TV programming. There is an arsenal of very different skills required:

organization, legal expertise, audience analysis, program mix and flow, and money.

Money usually heads the list as the first problem. How do you pay for equipment and programming?

This is really a matter of channeling existing resources. Advanced technology has lowered the price of new equipment. And used equipment is always coming onto the market.

Folks all over the country have been investing thousands of dollars into existing public television stations — in many cases because they are the "least objectionable alternative." Viewers can be expected to provide a modicum of support on an ongoing basis to new alternatives.

The resources now being channeled into supporting video production have created a large pool to draw upon for money and programs. Alternative stations could become focal points for similar video funding. The availability of a broadcast outlet should, in fact, provide added stimulus for such support.

All of this is not to say that it will be easy. Such a station is likely to be under-

capitalized and chronically underfunded. Nobody will get rich from its meager salaries. The studios will be less than sumptuous.

A second problem is the sheer quantity of programming. How do you fill day after day with material you can be proud of?

The answer is to begin modestly. Start with only a few hours a day, say the fringes of prime time. Repeat programming often. And do live TV!

The environment in which alternative video producers now work guides them toward heavy production. There are only a handful of opportunities for live TV anywhere.

But production work is enormously time-consuming. We will need to develop the art of "on-stream production." It will happen fast, often be quick and dirty, sometimes boring, but it will happen. And the live quality, the immediacy, the spontaneity, will be conveyed to the audience.

There has been one try at an alternative, viewer-supported station, KVST in Los Angeles. That station recently went dark. Although this is not the place for a full analysis of that situation, this should be seen as a setback, not a defeat. We will learn much from their experience.

There are currently two other groups working to build alternative stations. Double Helix Corporation (PO Box 8187, St. Louis, MO 63156) and the Reginald A. Fessenden Foundation (131 Wilder, Los Gatos, CA 95030). Both are cur-

rently at the FCC licensing stage and fighting their way through legal problems.

It is interesting to note that these two groups did not grow out of the "video movement," but rather from the community radio experience. The people involved are seeking to apply their broadcasting skills to a new medium, video.

The point of this article is to encourage a balance to this development: to stimulate video producers to apply their skills to a "new" distribution system, broadcasting. This synthesis of broadcasting and video skills is essential to the growth of strong, alternative stations.

The community radio people have formed a new organization, the National Federation of Community Broadcasters. This organization pulls together the collective experience of dozens of successful alternative broadcast outlets. It is a good contact point for people who are interested in television broadcasting, and already includes folks working on such projects.

The Federation is holding a national conference this summer in Telluride, Colorado, June 17-20. The focus will be radio. But there will be workshops on television broadcasting as well. For more information about the conference, or to simply make contact with the Federation: National Federation of Community Broadcasters, 1716 - 21st Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009 (202) 232-0404.

**Tom Thomas works with the National Federation of Community Broadcasters.**

# NBC-NABET Strike: ENG Was the Issue

By ANDREA V.C. SHEEN

NBC, the National Broadcasting Corporation has negotiated the end of a six-week strike by the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET). NABET struck NBC on April 1, 1976 on the issues of jurisdiction, working conditions, and wages.

These surface issues, however, hide the revolution that is changing the broadcast industry: electronic newsgathering or ENG — NBC and NABET call it EJ, Electronic Journalism, in order to eliminate confusion with the abbreviation for engineer. The use of mini cameras, as well as small format, were the real issues in the NABET-NBC dispute.

"There would not have been a strike on wages alone," said Arthur Kent, president of NABET local 11 in New York. Because NBC wants to compete in newsgathering, it demanded changes in the NABET contract to meet the new requirements of electronic journalism.

Dick Goldstein, Vice President of NBC's Labor Relations Department, pointed out that certain changes in the NABET contract were needed in order to gain flexibility. The NABET contract was written basically for studio crews. According to Goldstein, ENG crews need a contract more like that of film crews covered by the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE).

For example, the number of days needed for posting ENG crews schedules prohibited their effective utilization. Under the new contract NBC gained more freedom in schedule changes. Where they were once required to give ENG crews a seven-day notice, they now only need give five days.

Another problem was the use of per diems, prevented by NABET in the past, but familiar to IATSE. Both NABET and NBC have come to an intricate, but compatible agreement about the use of per

diems in communities where no ENG crews are available.

NBC may not hire per diem workers within a two hundred mile radius of an area in which they have a regular ENG crew, according to the new guidelines. They can hire per diems within a 2-to-75 mile radius of the regular news bureau, however, with two limitations: 1) that this only occurs 20% of the time and 2) that the per diems are NABET members.

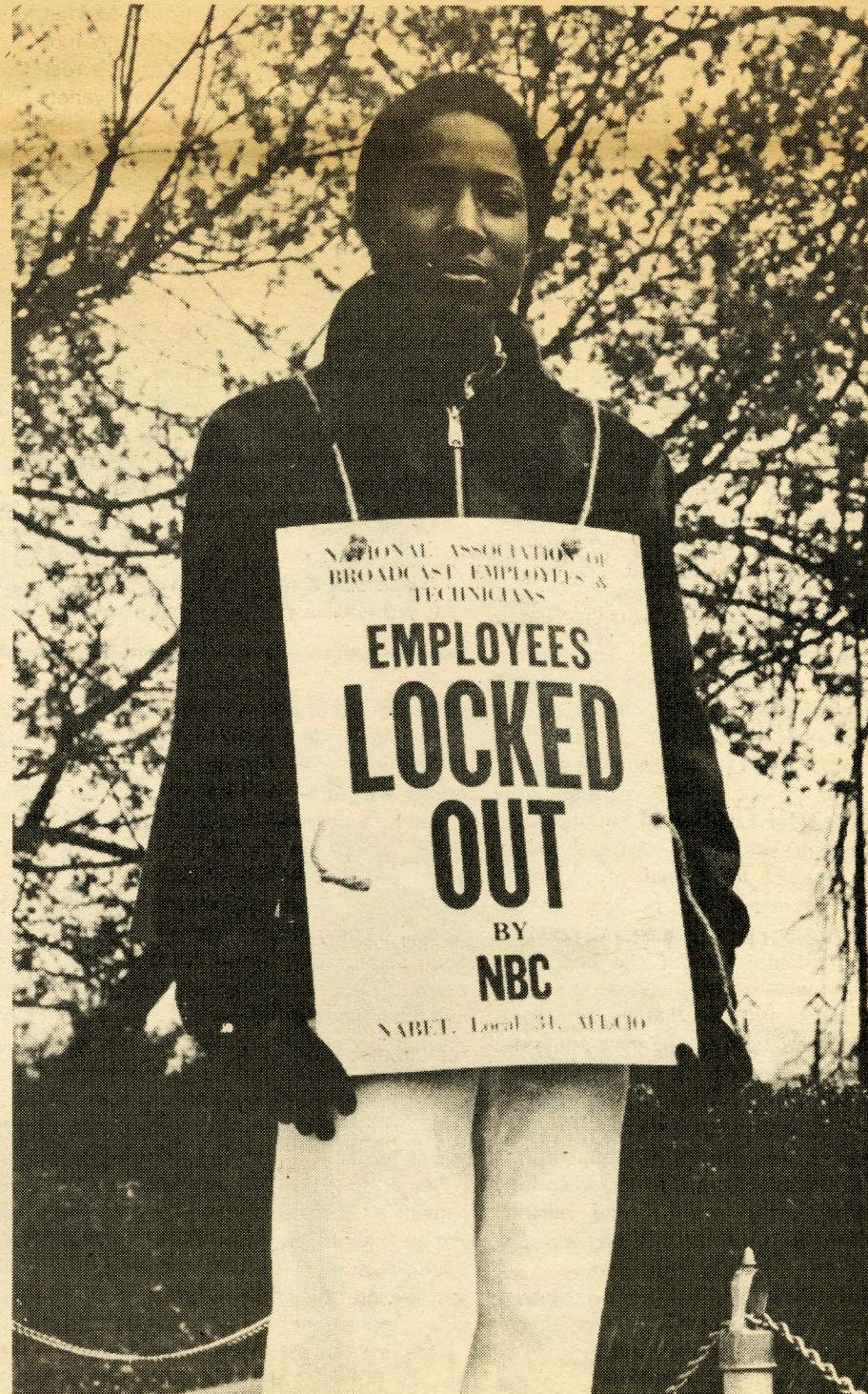
This allows NBC to compete for news stories they may not have been able to get because of time factor and prohibitive cost in getting crews to the site.

It seems unlikely that many independent video people will be able to benefit from the new policy. This reporter was unable to get a clear definition from either NABET or NBC as to the meaning of "NABET member" when it is applied to per diem workers. It is still a question if the per diem worker has to be a NABET member in good standing before the assignment occurs, or if he can pay dues to the union upon undertaking an assignment for the company.

The editing of small format tape (1/4 inch) was also a major issue. NBC tried to avoid the higher job classification usually applied to the editing of studio tape. By lowering the classification and creating separate editing rooms for small format, NBC could have saved itself money by eliminating some supervisory positions which the company felt were not needed. NABET, however, successfully thwarted this move by NBC.

Jim Kitchell, NBC's General Manager of News Services, projects that by 1980, 90% of newsgathering will be done electronically. NBC's contract is the first of the three networks to expire since the widespread use of ENG. An IBEW strike in Boston against Group W is currently deadlocked on the issue.

**Andrea Sheen is a New York-based freelance writer.**



**Joia Jefferson, a worker at NBC-owned station WRC-TV in Washington, on the picket line during the NABET strike against the network in May.**

PHOTO BY JAMIE LOMAX

# Video Workers: Unions and New Organizations

Differences sharpen as occupation grows up

By NICK DeMARTINO

A clear sign that video has become a distinct occupation — if not yet an industry — is the increasing tendency by videomakers to organize themselves around their mutual economic interests.

Broadcast TV's switch to small-format video has created a large new group of workers in the field, many of whom are already organized into trade unions. At the same time videomakers who once constituted what was known as "the video movement" have created a spate of new groups (see below) to organize non-unionized video producers.

Estimates of the number of people who make a living working in small-format video are necessarily hard to come by. The Bureau of Labor Statistics lists data only for the broadcast industry — which totaled 155,400 workers for 1976 in both radio and television, including such non-technical personnel as secretaries, ad salespersons, clerks, etc. Probably less than 1,000 work in production jobs in the cable TV industry. More than 400 TV stations have purchased new portable ENG video equipment creating perhaps 3000 jobs at most in some aspect of small-format video production.

The rest of the people who make video are scattered throughout the country in small, almost invisible concentrations — hardly a classic "industry."

Herein lies one major contradiction among the video people, one which destroyed earlier organizing efforts and which is embodied in some of their new organizations. *What is the basis for organizing? Is it the common use of similar hardware, or do other factors play a more important role?*

Early efforts at organizing video people were largely non-discriminatory. Anyone who made video could show up. The April Video Conference and Jamboree in 1972 at New Brunswick, N.J., attracted 300 people from almost as many different kinds of video activity. The follow-up organization — the April Video Coop — barely lasted out the year, despite a group which performed centralizing functions. A year later a West Coast version of the same experience occurred at Anaheim, California. Several hundred videomakers and media activists formed the National Association of Media Action, which had a life of about two months.

These groups failed because they lacked a clear purpose and because most participants seemed to have a constitutional aversion to any hint of centralization. Their anarchistic politics rejected even thinking of themselves as part of a video "industry," much less helping to organize what really amounted to a trade association for the budding entrepreneurs, even though the consistent demands at these meetings were for the sort of activities which trade groups in Washington routinely perform for their members — lobbying, information exchange, investigation into funding and hardware developments, and rationalizing such economic matters as tape distribution and contract negotiations.

It's not surprising, since the prototype organizational structure for videomakers came out of the counterculture days of the late 60s, when a handful of young people experimenting with portapaks created collectives with clever names and socialized work habits. The name of one of these groups stuck — people

who made video were thereafter known as *videofreaks*.

These video groups are self-employed, own their own tools, and must rely upon the fruits of their own labor for their livelihood. They have less in common with workers at a TV station or other large institutions than with other craft-workers — the videoartists, the small videobusinesses which hustle their work gig by gig, the entrepreneurs who sell a service. This group also includes most of the non-profit community video cen-

the Association for Educational Communications Technology, the Health Education Media Association, or the new Association of Audiovisual Technicians.

Of course, many workers have class or worker consciousness, and belong to bargaining units of the unions which have organized their workplaces. A video worker who carries a union card is more likely to belong to the American Federation of Teachers, the Teamsters, or a hospital workers union, rather than a union that specializes in the particular craft he or she performs.

Which is a greater need — to share in the common, day-to-day struggles in the workplace, or to have a national organization which organizes all personnel that use video, regardless of workplace?

This is, of course, one of the primary struggles in labor history — the contra-

NABET is an industrial union; IBEW and IATSE are craft unions. Yet in most situations, the penchant for the craft-union's division of labor dominates.

Craft unions, almost by definition, find rapid technological changes difficult to deal with, tied as they are to a particular skill associated with the older, generally less efficient technology. Management introduces new technology because it offers new markets or because it can provide greater productivity and efficiencies.

Today we can see how the introduction of ENG equipment into the broadcast industry was motivated by the push towards greater productivity from news crews (see page 9). The impact of the changes on the workers and their unions is only now beginning to unfold.

The development of television in the postwar years presented a much more massive change in the motion picture production industry than today's switch to electronics.

As one organizer described it, "the New York production unions (IATSE craft unions) refusing to depart from their traditional 'contractual' standards lost an opportunity to move into the new TV field. To cushion the severity of their unemployment, they declined admittance to new applicants. Many of these had received their craft training in military service during the war. They gladly went to work for the new TV independent producers, agencies and sponsors of industrial films for TV exhibition."

The workers formed the Association of Documentary and Television Film Craftsman (ADFTC) and by 1952 were producing some 80% of non-features and non-major producer work, including commercials.

The attraction of these new workers was overwhelming to producers — greater flexibility, lower wages, smaller crews, and interchangeability of jobs. The IATSE craft unions were losing members so they formed the East Coast Council of Motion Picture Production Unions, solely to organize and keep production in IATSE. NABET, which had chartered ADFTC as a local, engaged IATSE in a jurisdictional battle over the workers. This rivalry between unions — which also includes IBEW — has recurred periodically as new groups of workers became identified by the union bureaucrats. Needless to say, the competition between unions has warmed the hearts of management.

Merger talks have been going on between IATSE and NABET for some time, but the structure and philosophy of the two unions is so different that many observers doubt whether it will ever happen, no matter how useful it might be to the workers.

Meanwhile, the ENG issue may prove to be a major labor question in the coming years, especially if the newer methods of production pioneered by the independents are sought after by the networks.

Jurisdiction over the new equipment has been an issue in two recent strikes — the NABET strike against NBC, which was the first of the networks whose contract expired since the spread of ENG, and an IBEW strike against a Boston Group W station, which is deadlocked.

The major issues in these strikes are bread-and-butter, though union and management are at odds over ENG. Management wants to increase the use of freelancers on a per diem basis. A compromise was reached, in the NABET strike, allowing a small increase for NBC.

If future labor negotiations continue to open the door to more freelancers in the ENG field, the independent video documentarists may find a new market for their work. This absorption into the union-network structure is one direc-

## Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

(80 Leonard Street, NYC), two-year-old membership org of about 250, 80% filmmakers, working in NYC. Exploratory meetings have been held in DC and LA. Dozens of committees work on issues, print newsletter, sponsor screenings. Biggest success: lobbying against AFI independent funding before Congress.

## Bay Area Video Coalition

(50 Oak St., Room 501, San Francisco, CA 94102) Membership org formed in February, which has attracted 80 members to meetings. Catalyst was Rockefeller Foundation grant, which was made in May (\$30,000 for study of video resources and feasibility for editing facility).

## Coalition for New Public Affairs Programming

(1912 N St., N.W., DC 20036 & 1800 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 900, LA CA 90067) Alliance of 15 independent video groups producing for public TV formed in Feb. to increase access and funding for independents on public TV. 30 page statement to CPB called for Independent Production Fund, which has been proposed by Ford/NEA.

## National Association of Broadcast Engineers and Technicians (NABET)

Represents some 6500 broadcast employees, including non-technical personnel at some stations. NABET was a house union at NBC in the radio days, and joined the CIO as an "industrial" union. When NBC split into two nets — ABC & NBC — NABET got two national contracts.

## International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)

Represents 12,000 broadcast workers out of 900,000 members in 12 crafts. IBEW was an AFL "craft" union. Both IBEW and NABET were certified when AFL and CIO merged in 1950s. IBEW has the CBS national contract.

## International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees (IATSE)

Represents craftspeople in separate divisions (lighting, sound, camera, projection, etc.) and is strongest in West because of the film industry.

ters and access projects, which often share the hustle mentality of other small businesses, even if the object of their efforts is a grant, rather than a sale.

Today workers in these petit-bourgeois groupings are outnumbered by video people employed in industrial or institutional workplaces — corporate sales, training and industrial applications, education, medicine, information science, security and surveillance, police and other fields.

What do we call them? They aren't like those who continue to call themselves videofreaks, carrying the message of vidicon salvation with almost missionary zeal.

Rather, they are people who have jobs in many different kinds of institutions, who are as likely to learn their video skills as audiovisual technicians or from on-the-job training, than by participating in the video "movement."

Most institutional video workers have bosses, but many see themselves as professionals and identify with management and with colleagues across their particular industry. They may belong to specialized professional organizations like

the craft unions, which organize members according to the particular job they perform, and the industrial unions, which organize all workers in a particular job site.

The split came to a head in the 1930s when the conservative American Federation of Labor, dominated by craft unions with skilled membership, refused to organize the masses of workers in manufacturing industries. This spawned the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The two groups merged in the 1950s, though the legacy of the split remains today in many industries.

A good example of this split can be found in the broadcasting industry which has been organized by three different unions (see box). While IBEW and NABET hold national contracts with the three networks, local stations, which employ the vast majority of workers, form a jurisdictional crazy-quilt. Every market is different; a local station may be organized by a single union, split between two or three unions, or may only have part of their workers unionized.

The primary reason is the domination of the craft unions in the industry.

tion independents may go.

Most of the freelance work in NBC's contract will go to members of the NABET freelance local. However, if the net wants to use a non-union independent's work, they could join NABET.

In non-unionized stations, greater flexibility may see a variety of patterns developing. Coos Country TV, which began producing small format public affairs in 1973 for a small local station, has now moved onto staff at a larger NBC affiliate in Eugene, Ore. Their boss prefers that they stay on staff.

New York-based Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers was set up two years ago to represent interests of freelancers in various issues. Many of the members, who are mostly film artists, have worked for television — especially public TV shows like the *Great American*

some kind of union drive. We would resist it, unless given optimum conditions by the unions — no rosters, and we would be allowed to hire whoever we want."

TVTV, of course, is something of a supergroup among video producers. This is a trend for other video projects — the *It's A Living* series produced by Videopolis at WTTW in Chicago employed 10 primary people and another 10 part-time staff. Global Village in NY is negotiating with WNET for coverage of the New Jersey delegations to the national conventions, which would require several crews.

Indeed, one of the possible objectives of the recently formed Coalition for New Public Affairs Programming, is to explore the possibility of cooperative ventures,

**"What is the basis for organizing? Is it the common use of similar hardware, or do other factors play a more important role? These loose associations have had a tendency to lack a clear purpose."**

#### Dream Machine and 51st State.

From the videomaker's point of view, AIVF is too heavily dominated by filmmakers to represent an ideal bargaining agent. But AIVF has begun to serve many of the functions that unions frequently provide, and is dealing increasingly with economic issues.

If members produce substantially for the broadcast industry, history may repeat itself with an organizing drive by one of the unions.

The independent video producers which have found work in the broadcast industry have done so mostly by selling their finished productions to stations — generally public TV stations. Conflicts with the technical unions have developed in many of these projects, since most of the large public TV stations which tend to work with independents, are unionized.

Independents have had to "work around" what they call "the union problem," usually by offering their work as a property for station acquisition. Others work outside the geographical jurisdiction, or become artists-in-residence. Most difficult is when independents use a station's editing facilities, which are operated by union personnel.

The union workers rightly view the newer video independents as threats, if only because they are functionally scab workers, taking inferior wages from management, which could eventually erode their jobs. Yet the demands of the new portable equipment often don't fit the union jurisdiction. And certain kinds of productions simply would never come about if higher-cost union personnel were employed.

Union bureaucracies have not yet become interested in organizing the video independents, probably because they don't offer large pay-offs in dues-paying members. The bureaucrats generally are more interested in winning new contracts with large employers than in picking up random members. Hence, the target of current organizing drives are those stations which aren't unionized, and a few video editing or production houses that have large payrolls.

However, this may change. TVTV, which regularly employs about a dozen people, expands to 50-plus during large shoots like the *Super Bowl*. These workers are paid less than one-eighth the union scale. Says Shamborg of TVTV: "I expect when TVTV starts selling to commercial television there might be

perhaps a series, by experienced video producers who are already working in broadcast. The future of this national coalition depends on how similarly the members regard the relationship between the industry and the "independents."

The vast majority of video workers, however, are not oriented towards independent broadcast work. While small-format broadcast-quality hardware is much cheaper than investing in a studio, only a few groups have the capital to stay abreast of the changing technology. In addition the market for freelance work isn't yet that large.

If past history is any guide, it is far more likely that workers with broadcast skills will be hired into the industry either as a staff member or freelancer.

The need still evidently remains for the non-industry video people to form organizations which deal with their mutual problems, as evidenced by the recent efforts of organizers on the West Coast and in the South.

In San Francisco the Bay Area Video Coalition (BAVC) was formed this winter, catalyzed primarily by the chance for a foundation grant. The group has experienced considerable political in-fighting among its members, which represent not only the well-known video groups, but artists, institutional workers, cable access groups, employees of KQED, and community organizers.

A similar regional effort is underway in the South, through the efforts of Broadside Video, which hopes to call an organizational meeting this fall.

Unlike unions, where all workers share a common foe, these loose associations have had the tendency to lack a clear purpose, except perhaps a vague ideology of video. The danger exists for individualism to prevent the groups from ever getting off the ground. The other side of the coin is over-bureaucratization, even more likely when the prime goal of the group is the acquisition of foundation money.

Ultimately, the forms of organization which evolve out of the diverse and changing video field will depend upon the consciousness of its workers — something which springs not from the random instincts and inclinations of individuals, but from the conditions of work and forces within the industry (however we define it), as well as the economy as a whole.

## Changing Channels'

By JIM MULLIGAN and STEPHEN KULCZYCKI

Richard Nixon's last State of the Union address and University Community Video's first broadcast went on the air simultaneously on January 10, 1974. Both programs were tedious, amateurish and visually dull. The difference is that UCV's show got better.

Since that first pilot, U C Video has broadcast 47 half hour programs called "Changing Channels" on the Twin Cities' public television station, KTCA-TV. Approximately 90 videotapes produced locally by staff, University of Minnesota students and community people were aired.

Subjects ranged from music and art tapes to traditional non-traditional documentaries. The underlying theme throughout has been locally produced programming for a local audience.

Primary funding comes from student fees at the University of Minnesota. Last year UCV received 87¢ per student, per quarter, which amounted to an annual budget of \$130,000.

Long range funding is presently hinged on a non-profit, commercial, FM radio station University Student Telecommunications Corporation, UCV's parent, has in the works. If FM comes through the Video Center will receive a basic funding commitment from radio profits.

The Center started three years ago as an access project and has gradually turned into an alternative production house. The "access to tools" philosophy has gradually changed to "access to programming". Local alternative programming has become the main thrust of the Center.

"Changing Channels" is produced collectively by four staff and a continually changing nucleus of students and community people. Project and program ideas, critiques of past programs and discussions happen at weekly production meetings.

The Center has stayed with black and white since using the newvicon tube, which allows recording at extremely low light levels with good quality. Low light capabilities were essential in some of the *verité* material done.

Original material is recorded on Sony 8400's and 3450's. 3400's are also used in a pinch. The Center uses Sony 8650's for both playback and record in the production editing booth, with a 3M P-100 processing amplifier between machines. The edit is transferred to quad through an Ampex 800 time base corrector. The key function on a color switcher provides color burst and titles.

The television production department at the university provides the bulk of post production equipment and co-signs our contract with KTCA-TV. The university's signature on the contract was a must before KTCA-TV would give UCV air time.

The original cynicism and arrogance of the KTCA's management has mellowed slightly over the past two years. But they still insist on reviewing all programs 48 hours before broadcast for "appropriateness", despite Nielsen claims of 30,000 viewers.

University Community Video is now searching for new material. The Center would like to bring in one-fifth to one-sixth of the material broadcast from other places. The Center wants works that are alternative in concept or execution, primarily documentaries, anywhere from 30 seconds to 10 minutes in length.

If you have material that falls within these criteria, please call or write so that

UCV can arrange to screen the work and discuss the details. UCV pays a nominal fee of \$3.00 per minute or \$10 per segment, whichever is more.

The Center is especially interested in talented film and video makers whose works are not reaching as many people as they could through broadcast television.

## SPC Buys 28 Public TV Series

The Station Program Cooperative, public TV's convoluted market for series which provides about 40% of most stations' schedules, was completed in May and selected 28 series at a total investment of \$15 million. \$9.5 million came from the stations themselves, with \$3 million coming from CPB and another \$2.5 million from the Ford Foundation.

New Programs include the first all-portable-video entry, a half-hour magazine program for 10 to 14-year-olds called *Studio See*. Produced by South Carolina ETV Network on Sony cassette gear, *Studio See* cost \$327,443 for 28 segments, of which the SPC provided \$254,226.

Other new shows include *The Age of Uncertainty*, John Kenneth Galbraith's look at industrial society (a co-production of BBC and KCET in Los Angeles); *Scenes From A Marriage*, the original six-hour Swedish TV version of the Bergman film (packaged by WNET); *Opera Theatre Presents*; *Crockett's Victory Garden*, a horticulture show by WGBH; *Parent Effectiveness*; and *The Best of Ernie Kovacs*.

## Workshops At PBS Stations

New York video group Global Village will conduct a series of regional workshops in the use of small-format video at 10 public TV stations this fall, with \$80,000 from grants by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Workshops will involve station creative, management and technical personnel with local film and video artists, and will be conducted in cooperation with the Coalition for New Public Affairs Programming, of which Global is a member.

Stations will be selected by a panel according to responses to a questionnaire. Details are available from Global, 454 Broome St., NYC 10012.

## 'People' Pilot Enlists Video Producers

Time-Life Television is developing a 90-minute special to serve as a pilot for a magazine series based on "People" magazine, and have hired away public TV's two top video producers for the NBC project. David Loxton, director of the WNET-TV Lab in New York and Fred Barzyk of WGBH-TV in Boston are working with Jane Wagner, Lily Tomlin's writer-producer. Ms. Tomlin will host the program, which will feature celebs as well as "ordinary" people. The latter may be shot by video groups TVTV and Downtown Community TV, both of which are negotiating for part of the show. They have worked with Loxton at WNET.

## FCC to Act on Jersey's Lack of VHF Station

By BARRY ORTON and ROBERT OTTENHOFF

The FCC has finally admitted that New Jersey which receives all its VHF television service from New York and Philadelphia broadcasters needs additional locally-oriented service.

In his March statement, FCC Chairman Richard Wiley called New Jersey's lack of VHF TV "a special case warranting unique and responsive action." Wiley promised a remedy to the problem by July this year.

New Jersey is one of only two states in the country without a VHF station. Channel 13/WNET, although licensed to Newark, was permitted to move its facilities to New York contingent on certain studio and program obligations.

New Jersey has 9 UHF stations—5 are small, commercial independents, and the other 4 are licensed to the state public broadcasting authority.

The FCC action came in response to a petition filed over two years ago by the New Jersey Coalition for Fair Broadcasting. The Coalition is chaired by U.S. Senators Clifford Case and Harrison Williams, Newark Mayor Kenneth Gibson, and two state legislators, and composed of over 20 statewide organizations.

The FCC said the solution to New Jersey's TV problem would have to be found within the existing allocations scheme and would center on ways to require the New York and Philadelphia broadcasters to have a greater "presence" in New Jersey. The Commission had not yet determined the precise definition of such a "presence", however.

In a separate but concurring statement, Commissioner Glen O. Robinson attempted to allay the Coalition's fears about the meaning of "presence," stating "... I believe such a presence must be something more than a post office box in Newark, a phantom film crew in Trenton or a stringer on a Vespa scooter roving the back alleys of Camden. I would require substantial local stations in New Jersey, and attendant staff for news and public affairs programming."

The Commission also requested comments on the possibility of requiring some or all of these out-of-state stations to deploy film or electronic news gathering (ENG) crews to New Jersey, either as a substitute or supplement to permanent New Jersey studio facilities.

The Coalition has used the new ENG (electronic news gathering) technology for designing a system for improving New

Jersey news coverage that would be part of the FCC's hyphenation requirement. It incorporates portable "mini-cam" technology along with a series of fixed microwave relay towers that would increase the potential for video transmission to the studio base.

Essentially the system would work like this: regular mobile mini-cam units would be assigned to cover New Jersey stories. Within 30 miles of their studios, depending on line-of-sight requirements, the crew would send its news stories, live or taped, back directly to the studio. Beyond the point of normal one-hop microwave transmission, the mini-cam unit would relay its signal to one of the fixed microwave relay towers for transmission to the home studio.

In New Jersey, a three-tower network would insure that no mobile unit would be more than a short drive from transmission range. The towers would be owned jointly by the participating stations. The total system would cost in the area of 2.5 million dollars.

While many cities using ENG systems maintain two microwave receiver sites to maximize their coverage area (New York's are the Empire State Building and the World Trade Center, Chicago's are the Hancock Tower and the Standard Oil Building), the Coalition outline is the first regional ENG system ever proposed.

Another proposal advanced by the FCC is to "hyphenate" the stations so that each would be responsible for its present city as well as one in N.J.

Initial comments were called for by the FCC by May 3 and reply comments by May 24. Because of the long-term nature of this problem, the FCC said it would attempt to expedite action and did not anticipate permitting any extensions of time.

The FCC decision in the New Jersey Rule Making was the culmination of over five years of action by the New Jersey Coalition. Organized in 1971, after a United Church of Christ study found only limited New Jersey news coverage, the Coalition filed several Petitions to Deny in 1972, withdrawing them only after the stations pledged to increase their New Jersey programming.

In 1975, some of the New York and Philadelphia stations agreed to assign news reporters to New Jersey beats and increase the amount of public affairs programming. But Coalition monitoring of local news programs has shown only small improvements in the amount of news coverage, even though New Jersey comprises 30% of the New York and Philadelphia television audiences.

The Coalition has been represented nearly from its inception by the Citizens Communications Center in Washington, D.C. It is located at 909 Broad Street, Newark, New Jersey 07102.

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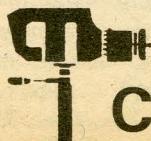
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*Getting non-print into mainstream use*

By EMMA COHN

Anyone working with video recordings and non-print materials concerned with providing adequate access to these materials must take a serious interest in cataloging. Cataloging is the only way non-print information can join the mainstream library use. And cataloging legitimizes the new media, making them more acceptable to those resistant to their use.

Vivian L. Schrader, Head of the Audio-visual Section of the Library of Congress' (LC) Descriptive Cataloging Division, described the LC's cataloging of video recordings and other non-print materials at an all-day seminar on non-print media sponsored by METRO, the New York Metropolitan Reference and Research Library Agency.

LC non-print procedures establish an unusual and perhaps questionable, relationship between catalogers and their materials. Schrader and her staff of eight work entirely from paper data sheets, furnished by producers or distributors, for materials which they generally never see. These materials will never be acquired for addition to the collections of the Library of Congress.

Schrader catalogs from original work only if it is being added to LC collections. The Library does not collect materials below the university level, which rules out most non-print materials of concern to public libraries and school media centers.

These revelations, and the fact that Schrader's section, unlike LC's Motion Picture Section, has no playback equipment for video recordings, aroused the seminar. Despite careful work so far invested in development of non-print cataloging since 1952, when Schrader's department first cataloged educational films, production of non-print cataloging is still at a rudimentary stage.

In 1965, when the first edition of non-print rules was worked on, over 50,000 films and filmstrips had been cataloged. By 1967 the first edition of Chapter 12 of the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules appeared.

In 1968, when the number of non-print items was mushrooming in libraries all over the country, the Section was asked to expand to include sets of slides, transparencies, and video recordings, then becoming important. The Library of Congress didn't really like the idea of getting involved in special types of media like flip cards, multi-media kits and dioramas, materials usually restricted to the classroom. At that time the rules favored theatrical motion pictures, since they were coming under copyright protection. But these rules just weren't working for the new formats and their contents, and the catalogers had to learn to shift gears.

Schrader stressed that the new Anglo-American cataloging rules for video are extraordinarily simple. Because the materials are changing so fast, the Division is trying to build flexibility into the evolving procedures. No LC catalog cards are currently being produced for video recordings, as they are for other non-print media, except in a very limited way. The portion of the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules dealing with video is meant primarily to help those who are doing their

own cataloging of video recordings.

Schrader's staff has worked particularly closely with the Canadian Library Association, the British Library Association, and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) on current revision. All materials for the new rules were sent out for comment to those who had sent in questions concerning the formulation of such rules. Earlier the revised Chapter 12 was repeatedly written and re-written before it went to the American Library Association.

Schrader said it all came down to the question of whether the mistakes of her Section were bad enough to warrant discontinuing their service. Rather than discontinue the non-print sections at the library because of their limitations, they should be enabled to improve and enhance their services.

The seminar left the audience with strong, somewhat conflicting feelings. In one way, the audience was more confident of their abilities to work out the problems in this difficult field, given the fact that the experts themselves find it so troubling. But there were feelings of frustration and irritation, too. We could try our own non-print cataloging, but we do not, after all, have the resources.

Ms. Morgan expressed the view of many librarians in support of this program when she said that this audience, who comes to see a show or hear a lecture, will have a chance to realize the other kinds of resources available to them there, information on how to get food stamps or on how to look for a job, and so on.

## NY Library Opens Video, Film to Public

The New York Public Library has established a Film/Video Study Center open to the general public under a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. Located in the Film Library of the Donnell Library Center, it provides viewing facilities and the services of a skilled staff member (video-film historian/technician).

Administered by Mary Feldstein, the Center makes it possible to view and study the Film Library's collection of 16mm and 8 mm films, and its 3/4 inch video cassettes. The film collection includes representative historic films from Lumiere to the present, with special strength in the documentary, the avant-garde, and children's cinema.

The video collection consists of works of video art (funded by NYSCA).

The Film Library is also acquiring documentary/informational video. Although still modest in size, this will be the largest collection of video in New York State accessible to the general public.

In addition, equipment is available for the public to use for viewing their own videotapes and films, and to make video transfers from half inch to 3/4 inch cassette.

# Three Video Libraries Show Trends in Utilization: Florida, NY, and Mississippi

## Adult education, programming, and workshops

All over the country libraries are using TV to expand their population of clients. In some cases video is used as a hook to bring audiences into the library where they can see the print resources available to them. In other cases, librarians are aggressively using the media to reach out with information in the most popular format.

And, in a few cases, librarians have taken a leadership role in defining a community's uses of media through cable/access battles and by providing workshops and equipment that turn the audiences into producers.

To illustrate this range of activities, *TeleVISIONS* reports on library TV and video projects in Mississippi, Queens, N.Y. and Tallahassee, Florida.

## Public TV Follow-ups

Well publicized free sessions organized around *A Climate for Genius*, six Public TV programs on Mississippi writers, are drawing crowds into libraries throughout the state according to Madel Morgan of the Mississippi Library Commission. The success of the National Endowment for the Humanities funded programs on such writers as Faulkner, Eudora Welty, and Richard Wright has lead the Mississippi Committee for the Humanities to fund the Library Commission for more work in the same vein.

Following up broadcast on the eight station ETV system which blankets the state, local libraries are distributing cassettes of the programs.

Continuing NEH practice, this series is centered around the contribution of academics. Actual direction of the program comes out of Mississippi State University, and 11 scholars are assigned by region to prepare readers' guides and evaluate humanities related resources.

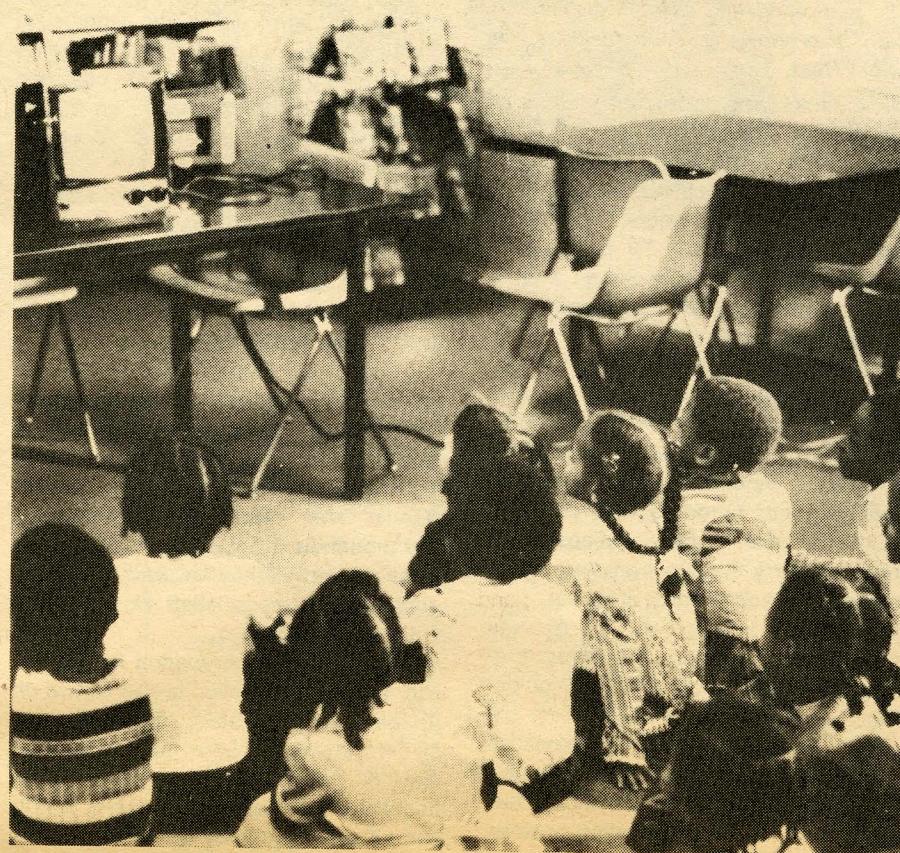
The NEH has funded adult education programs through library systems all over the country. In Prince Georges County, Md., for example, each episode of Public TV's *The Adams Chronicles* was coordinated with displays, background reading kits, and discussion sessions.

Librarians we talked to have mixed feelings about the development of this sort of Endowment program. In many instances, Mississippi among them, library personnel have not been given the creative role they are equipped to play. However, they are pleased to begin serving people who had never used the library.

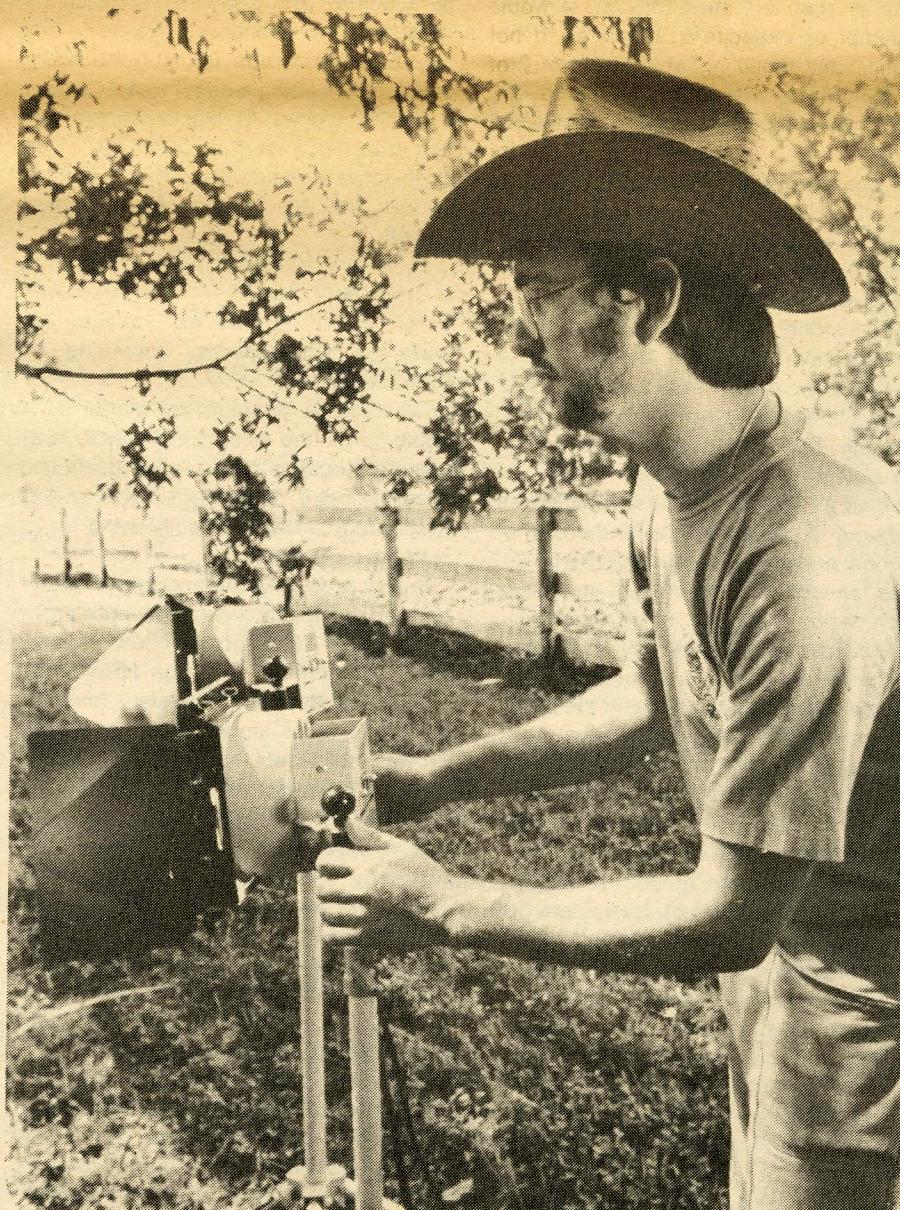
In Mississippi, over 40 local libraries in smaller towns, like Tupelo, Picayune, Carthage, Starkville, Amory and Indianola have signed up for the package, and a survey, now in progress, is expected to show a dramatic increase in book circulation. It's clear from local press that the programs are cultural events focusing attention on the library as meeting hall and putting it in the mainstream of popular resources.

Librarians have supported the programs fully. One original aggressive role they took up was to distribute UHF antennae to make viewing possible for VHF-only-households.

Outside evaluator, Carlton Rochell,



Kids at Langston Hughes Community Library watch video-tape of themselves at preceding week's story hour.



Mississippi ETV crew on location for taping of NEH sponsored programs on Mississippi writers.

director of the Atlanta Public Library, saw strong ties growing between academics, librarians and ETV personnel. He sees this relationship as the "single most valuable contribution of this program."

Because of these successful relation-

ships and the response of viewers who came to use the library, the Mississippi Committee for the Humanities funded *Dixie '76* this spring, a four-part series bringing academic panelists to lead discussions in 27 local libraries on broad

subjects, such as industrialization and prejudice. *The Daily Corinthian* (Corinth, Miss.) of April 9 quotes Joe Stockwell, the program author, on the role of the visiting academics: "The humanists will formulate key questions, identify conflicts, and summarize points of view."

## In The Streets

The Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center in Queens, N.Y., is using video to reach out to an audience that has rejected or been denied traditional library services.

The staff goes into the prisons with original video productions on such problems as job search and sickle cell anemia.

Young children in all the neighborhoods wait for the traveling picture book hour where they can see the tape of themselves responding to last week's story. A teenmobile shows films and tapes.

Feedback is used at all levels as a tool stimulating involvement and self-definition. All the workshops, from black history to ballet and sewing, are videotaped. At a job corps center, video carries the message of library services. Playback of on-the-scene documentation and book discussions are the high point of each visit.

The storefront center, the base of operations, sports two monitors with regular showings from a collection of tapes by the staff and the Creative Artist Public Service program.

One model tape shown from the center's window is the "before and after" of a neighborhood cleanup performed by CETA workers. The tape displays their energy and helps create an interest in community action projects.

## Access Comes First

In Tallahassee, Florida, the Leon County Public Library has put access as a priority before their own production plans. Since December, basic operations and editing workshops have trained 200 people to use the half- and three-quarter inch equipment, and tape, available free to all library card holders.

State Fine Arts Council and Library Service Construction Act grants fund two full time staff who also put out cable information and are pressuring the city's negotiating committee to make access a substantial part of the franchise renewal in 1977.

Not in the top 100 markets, the Clearview-Westinghouse 12-channel system reaches 15,000 subscribers with an access channel instituted in January after the FCC 3500 subscriber rule. The company hasn't publicized the channel or the 3/4-inch studio equipment set aside for access, and consequently, video aspirants have been routed through the library.

The first of May, several hundred people attended a four-day symposium featuring a discussion with Hermaine Freed and showings that surveyed all the trends in video art.

Lynne Bachleda and Anne Johnson, the two video coordinators, have plans to expand into their own production and distribution. "We want to get started making tapes on local government activities and all kinds of services that are available locally, and then get the tapes to the people who would benefit from the services—that may mean putting the tapes on the cable, or showing them in the local pool halls."

# USOE, ESAA-TV, CTW, CPB: DOA, MIA, or RIP?

*Does target programming serve minorities?*

By REBECCA MOORE

Should a federal program that funds TV shows for minority kids to promote school desegregation and end racial isolation be junked because of charges of red tape, incompetence, and government censorship?

That's the big question broached by a U.S. Office of Education-sponsored report presented at the last NAEB convention. Researchers at the Institute for Communications Research at Indiana University studied federal investments in television programming in order to aid future USOE policy in children's TV funding. The USOE has so far spent over \$50 million on children's TV.

"The Federal Role in Funding Children's Television Programming" provides a side-by-side comparison of the Children's Television Workshop — producer of Sesame Street and The Electric Company — and ESAA-TV, a minority-centered TV funding program administered entirely within USOE.

The report cited a variety of problems with government involvement in children's TV. Lack of short-term or long-term policies, lack of coordination among the various television projects, and "lack of governmental trust in professionals to do a good job," were just a few of the faults reported.

Drawing the most fire was ESAA-TV. The brainchild of Sen. Walter Mondale (D-Minn.), ESAA-TV became part of the Emergency School Aid Act in 1972. The Mondale Amendment established that a minimum of 3 percent of total ESAA funds were to be set aside for funding children's TV for the "development and production of integrated children's programs of cognitive and affective educational value."

The rationale for ESAA-TV, according to its director, Dave Berkman, was that "if one Sesame Street were good, eight or 10 would be better."

Fourteen ESAA-produced series, then, should be best of all, right? Wrong, according to the USOE Report's principal researcher, Keith Mielke, *if they're not reaching an audience*. "One could have difficulty justifying mass media for any target audience use," he feels. "Part of the problem (with ESAA-TV) was a difficulty in reaching viable levels of audience."

But ESAA-TV, by definition and regulation, is intended to reach those small target audiences of minority kids — Black, Native American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, etc. — who have been denied TV programming geared to their needs. ESAA-TV contracts with non-profit organizations for high quality TV series for unsponsored airing on public and commercial TV. Although the shows are aimed at at-home viewers, they must be of in-school instructional quality as well. The series, targeted at national or regional audiences, range from magazine format, Sesame-style programs emphasizing skill improvement, to dramas and sitcoms highlighting daily problems minority groups face.

Five shows are available now: "Gettin' Over," a survival series for adolescents; "Carrascolendas," a bilingual musical comedy series for 3-to-9 year-olds; "Villa Alegre," another bilingual show for 3-to-9 year-olds; "Mundo Real," bilingual program about a Puerto Rican family on the

U.S. mainland; and "South by Northwest," five shows on Black cowboys in the old West.

Nine others, plus continuations of "Carrascolendas," "Villa Alegre," and "Mundo Real," will be available this fall. Additionally, "Vegetable Soup," produced with ESAA money but not under David Berkman's 3 percent ESAA-TV program, is now on NBC. "Vegetable Soup," one of the most popular ESAA programs, was originally rejected by PBS.

In addition to the 500 shows and 225 hours of programming, ESAA-TV also funded Chicago's WTTW-TV to do a series of 30- and 60-second spots. The PSAs were funded to reach the vast majority of kids tuned into the commercial, rather than public, stations. PBS would not carry the spots anyway, since they require Federal script approval.

The direct involvement of minority groups in every aspect of program production, required under ESAA-TV guidelines, has been one of ESAA-TV's big selling points. The record far surpasses minority participation on either commercial or public television. "Public TV has had a policy, not of segregation or isolation," says ESAA-TV's Berkman, "but of total exclusion."

Close to 60 or 70 percent of ESAA-TV project staff are members of minority groups, according to Berkman. "We didn't want white folks laying their trip on minorities," declared the white 35 year-old mass communications specialist.

## **"The Infinity Factory"**

For example, the staff producing "Infinity Factory," a math skills show for Latino and Black audiences, is about two-thirds minority, claims staffer Dr. Mitchell Lazarus. "We feel this is the only way to do the show right," says Lazarus. "You can't tack on ethnic concerns as an afterthought. The content must spring from the experiences of the staff."

Some 21 pages of ESAA-TV guidelines spell out in scrupulous detail the kind of minority participation required. The guidelines specify the number of minorities each series' Advisory Board must have — at least half being parents of children in the target audience. Students must also be on the Advisory Panel if the series is aimed at the secondary school level. Additionally, points are awarded in contract-granting in direct proportion to the extent of meaningful minority employment written into the contract proposal.

Unfortunately, the guidelines and the arbitrary point system of criteria used by a "blind" quasi-federal advisory panel, don't necessarily assure the funding of minority production companies. The attitude of many companies is "We need minorities, so let's go out and hire some minorities," according to "Infinity Factory's" Executive Producer Jesus Trevino. That's different from the internal development of minority projects."

The result of this kind of funding may be merely temporary employment for minorities rather than the establishment of on-going minority institutions. "Many people will have left 'Infinity Factory,'" says Trevino, "and EDC (Educational Development Corporation) will remain much the same, only with a minority production credit."

Federal fiscal oversight of production costs, site visits, and "suggestions,"

don't seem to answer the question Trevino raises. Instead, the constant monitoring may just succeed in adding more "complex requirements," to consume energy through "the drain of administration," as Keith Mielke charges.

Mielke claims that "There have been a host of administrative difficulties." His report, based on "Carrascolendas" and "Villa Alegre," the only two ESAA-TV programs operational at the time, cites cumbersome financial audits, complex minority quota requirements, detailed budgetary review, "mishaps" on ESAA-TV gradings, and a general "drain on bidders."

"We are concerned with the administration of things not dealing with content," explained program director Berkman. Site visits, checking legitimate expenses, "translating the law into regulations," were examples he mentioned.

If Mielke felt there was too much administrative oversight, others wonder if in fact there were enough. "Berkman had no control that I could see," said a staff member (wishing name withheld) of "Gettin' Over." "His visits were cosmetic. The first show they presented him was a piece of shit... They showed him a program and he was satisfied. He didn't see the internal rotting."

"Gettin' Over" was funded for \$2 million. Two full production crews — two directors, two assistant directors, two camera crews — were funded to complete 60 half-hour shows in a year. Later negotiations reduced the number to 52, and 47 were eventually finished.

"Gettin' Over's" difficulty is an indication of another, more sensitive, problem: professional competence of some minority staffers. Are ESAA-TV projects intended to be on-the-job training? No, says Berkman, who adds that only a few points out of 100 are awarded for OJT.

Yet for many at "Gettin' Over," production experience was in fact OJT. "The staff was unqualified," said the ex-staffer. "It was OJT for most people, including myself."

Evidence from the "Infinity Factory" is contradictory, however. The "vast majority" of Factory staff were already established professionals, according to Dr. Lazarus.

"The quota system, no matter how noble, is not the most direct way to successful programming: creative talent is," asserts Mielke. He adds that even minority producers have difficulty living up to quota requirements.

If red tape and incompetence aren't enough, Mielke throws in one more problem: "There's a danger of federal involvement in content." Although HEW's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs is no longer in the script-approval business, thanks to a USOE disclaimer tacked onto the end of each program, ESAA-TV spot announcements still require prior sanction. One spot featuring Bill Cosby saying he hates Blacks, Italians, Poles, et al. — and ending up isolated as a result of his prejudices — was canned by the government censors. But the TV shows, according to Berkman, are free from government interference in content.

Berkman emphatically denies any federal involvement in content control, although he acknowledges that some HEW officials did, in fact, attempt to exert script control. "But let me state categorically, we do not, we will not, we do not want to get involved in content." PBS would not accept ESAA-TV shows until it had, in fact, determined there was no evidence of script approval or content control.

"There's only one instance of what could be called interference," claims Berkman. "We told the producers of 'Carrascolendas' and 'Villa Alegre'

that we'd like to see a little more Black presence in the cast, as required by the regulations." He asks, "Now what is example number two?"

"Berkman denies ESAA-TV has involvement in content," admits Mielke. "But there are subtle and indirect ways to achieve this."

Mielke feels the pressure on producers is unmistakable. "We heard various anecdotes from ESAA-TV contractors on the way they were perceiving the Federal interest." He declares "There are allegations to this day that ESAA-TV gets involved in content." But, in the Report and in an interview, Mielke could not be specific about any instances of federal interference other than the one episode Berkman sees as perfectly justified.

Other problems also plague ESAA-TV. Promotion budgets, for example, are one point of agreement with Berkman and Mielke. "It completely underfunds promotion," declares Mielke, "which is just as important as lights and cameras to programs." Low promo budgets make it even harder to get the ESAA-TV shows on the air.

## **Too much with too little**

Another criticism made is that each show tries to deal with too many needs. "The problem comes in trying to look for a universal panacea," says "Infinity Factory's" Trevino. "They try to do too much with too little." The result: competition among different minorities for bigger slices of the funding pie.

Despite the fact that it's a "difficult situation for committed minority people," Trevino feels, "you can't say it's too tainted to get involved in." Trevino suggests that minority input can provide long-term solutions to ESAA-TV's structural problems.

But structural changes are hard to argue because program assessment has been delayed, and no one yet knows how effective the shows are in meeting the law's objectives. "They don't know what impact they're having," says Mielke. A request-for-proposal is going out soon, though, for a summative evaluation of all the ESAA-TV shows, according to Berkman.

Even if an individual series is successful, the federal funding process may have a built-in failure factor. "Short-term funding through ESAA-TV will have a tendency to cut off a series just as marketing data becomes known," Mielke feels.

While five ESAA-TV shows have in fact been re-funded, Berkman admits there are drawbacks to the federal year-to-year funding cycles. "Sesame Street has had time to build a reputation... It has sustained staying power." Although a fair market trial generally takes four to five years, no ESAA-TV series has more than half a year of programs, five days a week.

Berkman says ESAA-TV staff considered funding only a single program that would be guaranteed continuity. The other side of that, he feels, is that the legislative intent was to meet the needs of a wide variety of minority groups.

"There are a multiplicity of needs," Berkman says, "with no one right answer. We have opted to meet a diversity of needs. Can you meet the needs of every group in a single series?"

The Indiana Report attempted to answer that question by providing three alternative models of program development: 1) CPB administered research, development, piloting, and series production; 2) pilot funding for the Station Program Cooperative (SPC); and 3) funding

an external advisory group on children's television.

At the same time, the report notes that CPB might not be the best place for producing children's TV, since the programs would have to compete with other needs. Although it suggests the CPB, the report concludes that "It's unlikely that CPB will be a major source of money for new children's programs."

### Here to stay

But as long as commercial TV seems unwilling to get involved in quality children's TV programming, federal support is likely to continue. "It would appear unlikely to expect the development of purposive television in commercial broadcasting on any large scale," says the report.

It appears that ESAA-TV, for better or worse, is here to stay yet a little longer. It is built into a popular piece of legislation, and funding seems assured for at least two more years. Several private corporations have begun to pitch money into the programs as well.

The question remains: is the federal dollar being spent wisely? One NAEB spokesman asked "Is this the most efficient way the government can be involved in funding programs for public TV?"

"The point is not to put money into public TV," responds Berkman. "It's to produce minority programs.... Given the record of public TV, where else is it going to happen?"

### Kid Vid Tidbits

#### By CATHERINE ARNOLD

*Resource Handbook on Programming and Handicapped Children* is the first in a series of books in preparation on specific topics by Action for Children's Television. The Handbook is intended to primarily aid broadcasters in developing programming "which will enhance the self-concepts and mutual understanding of both handicapped and non-handicapped children." It will include articles and bibliographic material on such topics as television images of handicapped people, television as a tool for affective education, and programming resources and guidelines relating to telethons and public service announcements.

Also in preparation for this series is a book based in part on information presented at ACT's fifth national symposium last year on Children's Programming and the Arts.

*TV: The Anonymous Teacher*, produced by United Methodist Communications in cooperation with Dr. Robert Liebert of The Media Action Research Center, is a new film taking another cut at the issue of TV's effect on the lives of children. The 15-minute, 16mm presentation includes areas such as advertising, sexual and racial stereotyping, and role modeling, with commentaries by Peggy Charren of ACT; Dr. Sheryl Graves of New York University; Dr. Aimee Leifer of Harvard University; Dr. Alberta Siegel of Stanford University; and Joyce Spafkin of the Media Action Research Center. The film also presents a strong discussion on TV violence and its effect. Film producer Jeffrey Weber uses a split screen to simultaneously depict a TV act of violence and children's expressions as they watch the episode.

*TV: The Anonymous Teacher* is distributed by Mass Media Ministries, 2116 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218. Rental is \$20; purchase price is \$225.

## Research Video Family Studies Challenge Myths of the 60's: Data Affects Nutritional Planning

*An interview with Anna Lou de Havenon*

By JAN WITAL AND KAREN TILBOR

Suspicious of soft sociological data in the 1968 Moynihan Report, anthropologists Anna Lou de Havenon and Dr. Marvin Harris, both of Columbia University, decided to use video as a research tool. Along with Dr. Charles Goodrich, a New York family practice doctor, de Havenon and Harris set up video cameras, with consent, in families' homes to study nutrition habits, responses to "requests for action," and authority in family roles. What their cameras found was a lot of hard data that challenges the notion that mother-dominated families lead to the unsuccessful socialization of children.

Harris had written about the need to go beyond observation and interviews in 1964, and their first family study using video was undertaken through the Bronx State Hospital in 1968.

De Havenon predicts that video will become an established tool of health care within the next 20 years. "Since we've been doing a lot of medical work and using this data in health care, as soon as we can define a smaller sample and a method of collecting it," she says, "at that point we may have a typical eating day or activity day for a family as part of their medical record where a physician is treating them on the model of comprehensive family care that we are developing."

Can videotape penetrate the myths of urban poverty — particularly those concerning nutrition and family authority — which evolved out of the sociological studies of the late 1960's? De Havenon's recent study conducted in upper Manhattan suggests that it can.

The researchers set up video cameras in four homes to "find out what life is really like for families trying to make it in the city." Their work was motivated by a belief that "what is said, written, and talked about in sociological research does not represent the full range of life."

Our descriptions may only be as good as our ability to see," says de Havenon. By putting stationary video cameras in natural behavior situations, and operating them for two to four weeks by remote control, family behavior could be "seen" and micro-analyzed far more objectively, and accurately, than traditional first-person observations.

#### A new kind of analysis

As de Havenon says, "For our research purposes it offers an absolutely revolutionary instrument for collecting a data record which could then be subject to a new kind of analysis and result in empirically-based studies of cultural differences and similarities."

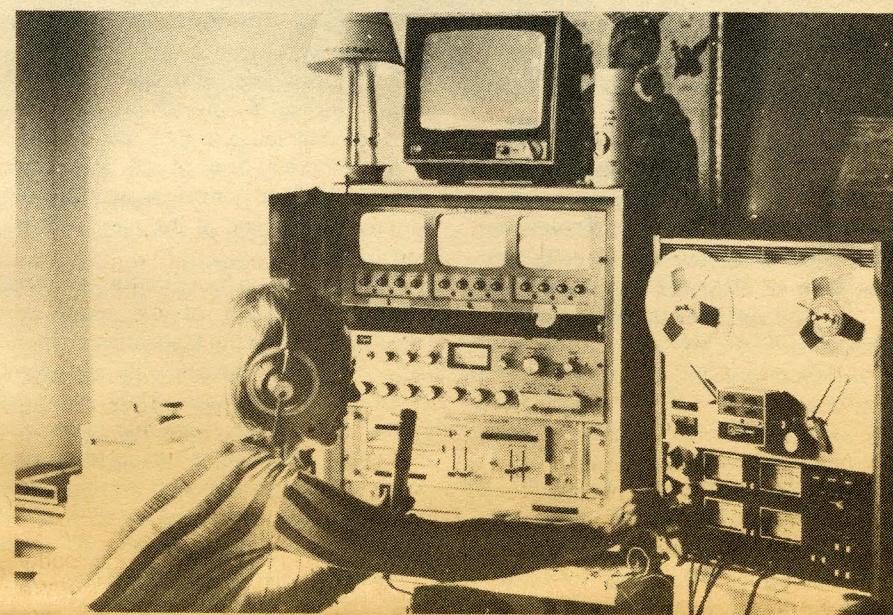
What the cameras observed did not, in fact, jibe with conclusions of the 1968 Moynihan and other reports. "Certainly the mythology of the sloppy eating patterns and sloppy household patterns and the disorganization that has been written about in the sociological literature was not found in any one of these four houses," claims de Havenon.

"We are terribly skeptical about what's being said," she continued, "and we are angry about what's being said so ir-

responsibly about black matriarchal families and all the public policies that are being influenced by this pernicious mythology."

The hypothesis of the \$80,000 NSF-funded study was that there are more similarities than differences between

De Havenon attempted to measure the influence of the cameras on family behavior. In a log book the researchers kept track of every time a person looked at a camera with a red star. They made graphs of the red stars for each family member. The result: everyone's camera consciousness went down to a negligible level.



Anna Lou de Havenon at a recording/monitoring station for her family nutrition studies.

black and white families' food distribution roles. Families were selected on the bases of equivalent amount of living space, one parent of urban birth, no formal education of parents beyond high school, and a minimum of four children. The four families were chosen from among 90 responses received from about 500 letters sent to potential participants. Two black and two white families were selected. In each racial pair there was one with the father living at home and one with the mother as the single parent.

The project provided guaranteed incentives for those who actually became involved. Each family was paid at a daily rate equivalent to their normal income.

Additionally, free medical care, provided by Dr. Goodrich, was promised to all family members, as soon as the cameras left their house.

Interpersonal contact between the families and the research team was limited until the results of the study were complete. At that time de Havenon conducted follow-up interviews with the mothers, during which the tapes were reviewed and the analysis discussed.

De Havenon's commitment to this follow-up procedure reflects the responsibility that was assumed toward the participant families. Before the onset of the study each family was assigned a lawyer who negotiated legal contracts to assure that individual rights were not violated.

Family members were entitled to turn off camera equipment at any time without risking loss of incentives, a right which was exercised on only two occasions, neither of which seriously complicated the data. On one occasion, a teenager simply preferred not to be recorded while eating; his personal need was respected by the researchers and he allowed the recording to proceed at all other times.

In each apartment cameras were installed for one to two weeks, before actual recording began, which was when it appeared from the logs kept at the monitoring stations that family members had become reasonably comfortable with the equipment.

During recording, natural lighting was maintained on all but one occasion when an infra-red tube was installed. De Havenon comments that she would increase the use of infra-red lighting in future videotape research.

Taping was done on only one camera at a time and recording priorities were determined by hierarchy in the family structure. The focus was generally on the mother unless another family "actor" commanded more attention because of significant behavior.

#### The technical plan

The technical plan for the videotaping was designed after the research team had familiarized themselves with the apartment and observed the family's use of space. Between three and four stationary cameras were set up on poles with microphones in the "public" rooms of each apartment; the "public" rooms, where the family members congregated most frequently, were the kitchen, the dining and living rooms, and the entrances and exits of each. In one home a camera was installed in the mother's bedroom because the family watched television there.

Tapes were monitored at nearby stations to which each family had a direct telephone line; thus, if any person had a question or a concern it could be expressed immediately. The stations were monitored twenty-four hours daily by teams of six, three men and three women, (continued on next page)

on six hour shifts. Having three cameras, each monitored by two people simultaneously, reduced the likelihood of logging error.

The availability of multiple opinions in the process of analyzing tapes, as well as the opportunity for unlimited playback, increased the probability of complete and unbiased documentation in the study.

"Observations can't even begin to approach video," says de Havenon. She and her colleagues are enthusiastic about the future of videotape in both scientific research and human service, although de Havenon was quick to point out that "the microscope is nothing without the theory motivating the analysis." In contrast to more subjective methods of research, videotape has the following advantages: "it provides an on-going record of behavior to supplement and complement information obtained verbally and it can be reviewed and analyzed by any given number of researchers or observers, thus safeguarding against individual interpretations of behavior."

The researchers can now distinguish between what is planned, what is actually bought, what is cooked, what is served, what is eaten and what is thrown away. The camera discovers one child giving her food to another. The camera discovers nonverbal requests, and an efficient hierarchy in which many family members play distributing roles. It shows that the current concepts used to describe the structures of families — such as head of household, patriarchal, or mother-centered — are not descriptive of actual behavioral events. As de Havenon sums up, "characterizations of ethnic or class family structures in terms of dichotomies such as organized/disorganized should be greeted with extreme skepticism."

Jodie Levin-Epstein, a nutritional lobbyist and program planner with The Children's Foundation and the National Academy of Sciences explained some of the possibilities opened up by the de Havenon study. "Nutrition programs are often aimed at particularly vulnerable groups such as infants, the elderly, pregnant and lactating women, and preschoolers. However, while it is one thing to design a feeding program for a target group, it's another to know that they actually received the nutrition supplement.

"Intra-family distribution of food would be valuable information for critics of the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program and the elderly in-home feeding programs. Is resentment created within the family? How much of the food is reaching the nutritionally at-risk individual?"

De Havenon reports the more immediate success of feedback when the mothers involved got a chance to view the tapes. She reports an easy and helpful self-criticism in viewing the differences between their ideas of food use and their actual behavior. Though, by and large, changes in their nutritional lives are out of their control and at the mercy of the economy.

Looking forward to a shorter and more collectable version of the study, de Havenon adopted the Manhattan methodology for studies her students undertook in Spain and in Japan. They kept log books while living with the family for 3 weeks, identified a typical day, and using a portapak recorded 24 hour days until they got one. The families were chosen according to the criteria used in selecting families in the New York study and the students gathered considerable information useful for cross-cultural comparisons.

## Meeting Your Match: Video Dating NYC

By JOY ELLIOT

Computer dating and singles bars may be things of the past if — or when — video matchmaking spreads around the country.

Already two videotape companies in New York specialize in dating services. Both are beginning to cable-cast their personal interviews with prospective clients in NYC and other cities.

Video date, or Videomate as it's known in New York, began over a year ago. Founders Hank Seiden and Matthew Kinzler use Sony, Hitachi and JVC black-and-white equipment to tape people seeking dates.

Teledate, founded in January to top the competition, according to owners Danny and Joshua Stein, tapes in color and plays back on a seven-foot Advent projector screen.

The modus operandi is similar for both. You fill up a questionnaire which is used as the basis for a warm-up chat and the unrehearsed taped interview. The questionnaire elicits information about yourself — address, telephone number, job, age and income range and dating habits, as well as your impressions of yourself, your impact on others and your preferences in people you like to be with.

Price is a big difference between the two companies. Teledate charges \$30 for a trial month, \$75 for three months and \$225 for a year. And, anyone registered with Teledate who brings in a new member gets a month free. Videodate

has no trial month and charges \$200 for the first three months and \$100 per quarter thereafter.

New York's Videomate director Steve Atkins says his company began by charging \$50 per three-month membership. They found, however, that the more they raised the price, the more new members poured in.

Teledate gives the telephone numbers of those who choose one another to both. Asked whether a woman — called a "girl" or "gal" at Videomate — might want to call up a man, Videomate said she would have to insist to be given a man's number.

Teledate admits that the aggressive public relations techniques of Videodate, accompanied by its obvious respectability, has done much to make the idea of videotape dating acceptable. Even those who might have looked down on computer dating, its technological precursor, are interested.

Though Videomate was reluctant to discuss what groups predominated its 700 New York members, one executive did mention that the large majority was professional. Among the men, lawyers and psychotherapists seemed represented in unusually large numbers.

Videodate/mate has already franchised or is about to franchise operations in Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, St. Louis, as well as Hamburg, London, Luxembourg and Paris. Teledate does not want to franchise, but plans to open offices soon in Madison, Wisconsin and Atlanta.

But if you accept completely what might be a reality of the future, you might even be able to provide a social service in your own city by setting up your own videotaping dating service. A portapak,

*Joy Elliot is a media student and professional writer in New York City.*

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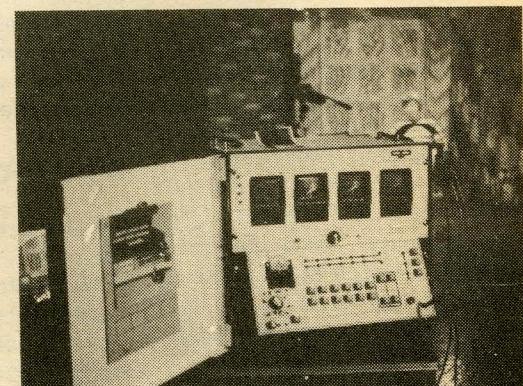
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## VIDEOART

# 32 Feet Per Second and Within the Nucleus

## Video Performances in San Francisco

By PATRICIA MOLELLA

Works of video performance have continued to proliferate since the 1974 special edition of *Avalanche* summed up the approaches to video art performance. One recent active performance at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art by Darryl Sapien and Michael Hinton on March 27 was part of a week-long program of video installation pieces and performances by Peter Campus, Frank Gillette, Paul Kos, Nam June Paik, and Joan Jonas, as well as a forum for discussion on the nature and character of video art. Present at the forum were David Ross, Deputy Director Television/Film, Long Beach Museum and organizer of the program, David Antin, Professor of Visual Arts, University of California, San Diego.

Darryl Sapien states in his notes that his performance is a synthesis of dance, sculpture and theater utilizing live video and audio transmissions to readjust the conventional relationship between performers, performance and audience. "Within the Nucleus consists of two performers equipped with cameras on specially constructed mounts who assemble a double helix ladder (based on the DNA molecule) from the floor of the San Francisco Museum auditorium through a hole in the ceiling thirty-seven feet above." The cameras were arranged so they would not hinder the performers' movements. The mounts were equipped with intercoms so that the voices of the performers in conversation could also be picked up and transmitted. . . . The camera images were fed synchronously onto two advent screens located on the stage of the auditorium and were tinted chromatic opposites, red and green, to match the coloration of the two separate ladders. The spectators could choose between watching the events through a transparent curtain or experiencing the piece via video transmission.

In *32 feet per second*, a piece performed in April 1976 in San Francisco by Doug Hall and Jody Proctor of T.R. Uthco, a San Francisco group, the video seems to have been more of an adjunct to the performance. Although the piece was piped into a gallery space by camera, spectators could clearly see (perhaps not so clearly hear) the entire six hours of verbal muzak from two men sitting on chairs welded into the brick of the La Mamelle Gallery. The main thrust of the performance was visual and psychological. The performers both sat in rigid positions, were both dressed in white, wore white sunglasses — much like some elevated regal assemblage. They appeared to have sprung full-blown from the masonry wall. Psychologically the performance echoed Acconci; but then he would never have donned the costumes that made *32 Feet Per Second* so theatrical. There was a continuous narrative in the third person, male gender, past tense. Ceaseless sound from surreal humans.

The performers created a psychic chemistry in which they both began to believe they were going crazy. *32 Feet Per Second* reminded me of a self-contained personal mythology. Everything was visible to the audience except the crux of the piece — the effect of this isolation from each other and from the audience.

These performances, though basically

dissimilar in form, are pervasively kindred in spirit. *Within the Nucleus* seems physically and aesthetically engaging; it partakes of process art, kinetic art and dance; it is more sculpture than theater. Only one element of the piece — the semi-transparent curtain which separates the audiences from the piece, prevents them from seeing clearly — strikes me as an extraneous confusion of an otherwise strong visual process. It is not clear why the performance needs to be obscured. *32 Feet Per Second* is a piece with

clarity of form, yet it is private aesthetically. There is a minimum of movement, and no comprehensible conversation.

Both performances concentrate on obscuring some element of the performance from the audience. In *32 Feet Per Second* the audience cannot know because no meaningful or revealing statements are ever made by the participants about their state; in *Within the Nucleus* the audience has a choice of seeing clearly indirectly or seeing directly but not clearly. It is this divorce between audience and participants that I find perplexingly interesting. Other video artists have obscured their activities, isolated themselves, performed for no audience — this concern says something aesthetically and culturally about video art that, I suspect, will continue to be articulated in video performances for some time.



Doug Hall and Jody Proctor are welded to the wall of the La Mamelle Gallery in San Francisco, babbling into their microphones and video pipes into monitors for the crowd below.

## NEA-CPB Artists at Public TV Stations Chosen

In the first year that a national artists-in-residence program at public TV stations has been open to video producers, the majority of projects named are using the video medium.

The program, which is funded jointly by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, was limited to artists working in super-8 film during its first three years of operation. This year's competition was open to video. Each grant was worth \$41,500, with \$7,500 coming from stations and the rest split between NEA and CPB.

All five winning stations are located on the East Coast. Winners were selected by a panel of a dozen people, including CPB, PBS and NEA staff, plus several outside consultants including D.A. Pennebaker, Charles Hobson, and Gerald O'Grady.

The following projects, which have not been announced officially, were selected by the panel in May:

- WETA-TV, Washington, D.C. — for Geraldine Wurzburg and Thomas Goodwin to produce a series of local arts and community programs on video. The two are principals in State-of-the-Art, a production company established to work in cooperation with WETA.

- WNET-TV, New York, N.Y. — for six mini-projects on both film and video by Aviva Slesin, Anita Thacher, Susan Rice, David Liu, Mitchell Kriegman, and Steve Gyllenhaal.

- WUNC-TV, Chapel Hill, N.C. — for Paul Edwards, Richard Ward and Edgar Woodward, three video artists, to produce four vignettes on topics of local interest, including stock car racing and country auctions.

- WVIA-TV, Scranton, Pa. — for Ron Cantor and Andrew Dintensass to produce portraits of the mid-Pennsylvania region, including people and workplaces in the heavily industrialized area.

Stations selected as alternates are KCET-TV, Los Angeles and WGBH-TV, Boston (both video) and WXXI-TV (film). The final announcement of all grants awaits final contractual details at CPB, which administers the project.

## NY Arts Council Tells Panelists

For the first time in its 16-year history, the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) has divulged the names of the advisory panels who judge applications in 11 categories of the arts. Billed as a "move to make its decision-making processes more public", the disclosure for the first time opens the individuals on various panels to public scrutiny. The guidelines under which panelists operate were also released. These rules specify that no panelist should serve more than three years, and that one-third of each panel's members should be replaced each year. A panelist may not vote on grants for organizations in which he is involved.

Members of the 1976-77 TV/Media Panel include: Philip Jones, Director, Ithaca Video Project; James DeVinney, Executive Producer, WXXI-TV, Rochester; Ed Emshwiller, film and video artist; Louise Etra, video artist; James Day, Professor of TV, Brooklyn College; William Sloan, Director, Donnell Film Library; Gerd Stern, President, Intermedia Systems Corporation, Cambridge, Mass.; David Stewart, Corporation for Public Broadcasting; Elaine Summers, choreographer, filmmaker; Stan Vanderbeek, filmmaker and media artist, Baltimore, Md.

# RESOURCES

## An Oral History Of Oral History

For anyone serious about documenting lives

By PETER KIRBY

ENVELOPES OF SOUND, ed. by Ronald J. Grele, Precedent Publishing, Chicago, 1975. \$7.50

From the Chapter "It's Not the Song, It's The Singing":

*Benison:* We live in an envelope of sound; all sorts of sounds. We blithely speak of the environment and this is one element of the environment that is so evanescent and changing. Here we have an instrument to collect sound; what is it like on the subway train? What is it like in a steel factory, or an automobile factory? We could preserve a part of our environment that historians a hundred and fifty years from now would bless us for. Do we do it? Absolutely not! Because we're still skewed to collecting the movers and the shakers.

*Terkel:* The makers and the shakers.

*Grele:* But also, we live in an age in which people have forgotten, really, how to see and how to listen. The most elementary facts of existence have been forgotten. In a sense, oral history, I think, opens up questions about seeing, reading and listening that are very important questions for the culture.

Oral historians are those people whose work is the recording of the recollections, stories, histories of individuals in many cultures in an attempt to write a form of history that is less dependent on documents, or that is based on information not obtainable from any documents. It is, in this country, the history of the recent past. Studs Terkel's *Working* and *Hard Times* are examples of one use of this kind of material, though he is not an academic historian.

The work of recording has been done primarily using audio recorders, but video recording is the ideal tool for preserving the most complete record. As the Chapter title from which the above quote was taken would suggest, inflection and gesture are often more important for a full understanding than the actual words spoken.

*Envelopes of Sound* contains four spoken performances by professional oral historians that have been transcribed and committed to print: an interview with Terkel, a group discussion among 6 oral historians moderated by Terkel, and two talks by individuals. What becomes apparent is the passion they all have for their work and the diversity of viewpoint, method and politics. Most of the fundamental questions of this form of documenting and interpreting history are raised, and no easy answers are given.

The remembrances and reports of the often less publicly visible members of a culture balance the instant history provided by television news and the news magazines. People doing video have for years talked of the "real" quality of the video image, of capturing and conveying what is real in a way that had not been

Damning the information flow. A catalog of people, meetings, books, survival techniques, and directions on how to find what we left out.

## PRINT

done before. The serious attention given to the problems and ambiguities of the recording process have been ignored by documentarians.

This book clarifies the importance of many problems. Being aware of them can only help to make for more thoughtful tapes, and perhaps tapes that will be important in the future. If you are serious about documenting people's lives, then this book is a must.

*Peter Kirby is an LA video artist, recently technical director and cameraman for "The TV Family," and equipment manager for TTV's Academy Award Show.*

## Video Artists Present Themselves

By PATRICIA MOLELLA

Video Art an anthology. Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot. 286 pages. New York, 1976: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$9.95 paper.

The first of two volumes — one devoted to video art, the other to social and informational uses of the medium, *Video Art* anthologizes practically and succinctly the comprehensive and often confusing states of video art. It is a welcome publication for the history and future of the visual arts.

As the editors explain in the introduction, no particular aesthetic is espoused and one feels the expansiveness of this attitude from the beginning pages. The plan and purpose of the volume is simple. It focuses on the work of primarily American artists who came to video from other media and whose work has contributed to the constantly shifting development of the medium.

The editors do not attempt to settle questions about the aesthetic, origins, or experimental nature of video; rather they let artists speak for themselves. Seventy-three of them, each given two pages, present statements about their work, photographs or commentaries. Obviously the freedom of their choices invigorates the volume. Some (like Hermine Freed) wrote capsule descriptions of video pieces accompanied by an informal personal revelation; Terry Fox chose two stills from *Children's Tapes*; Michael Snow reprinted parts of a letter to Pierre Theberge and a commentary on one of his works from a museum catalogue; Shigeko Kubota reprinted her piece "Video Poem".

What gives this section breadth is the inclusion of commentaries by people who use video as an adjunct to another art form such as Steve Reich, composer; Skip Sweeney and Joanne Kelly, creators

of dance/video works performed in live interaction events.

There are also articles on video installations: Nina Sobel's Telemetry Environment and Telemetric Drawings, and a capsule commentary by Ben Tatti comparing the electronic approach to Video Art to the traditional art approach to Video Art. And there are several informational commentaries on places, institutions such as The Kitchen, WGBH Workshop, and WNET, that have provided climates for the proliferation of the medium.

The section, *Commentary*, compensates adequately enough for the blitz of section one. There are footnotes, bibliographical references and pertinent observations on several aspects of Video Art history: David Antin's article, *Video: the Distinctive Features of the Medium*, *The Personal Attitude* by David Ross, *Image Processing and Video Synthesis* by Stephen Beck (a technical introduction to electronic video image-making), and an essay on the future, the transformation and philosophical importance of video, *Video in the Mid-'70's: Prelude to an End/Future*, by Doug Davis.

There is a five page article on video installations discussed within the cultural and social experience of television, by John Hanhardt, several articles on the national and international scope of video, and a decently comprehensive article on "Videoperformance" (fifteen pages) by Willoughby Sharp which categorizes and catalogues this aspect of video art historically and aesthetically. Whether or not these particular categorizations survive does not matter. At least those who are interested in performance video will have some handle on terminology and can begin with Sharp's explorations which added to Allan Kaprow's distinctions (regrettably not appearing in this volume) help assess the importance of video performance.

The book ends with a short but adamant essay by Ingrid Weigand called "The Surreality of Videotape." It is a statement about the way we "see" video, how the process of identification or rationalization is central to our perception and why the quality of video image is itself the basis for a great deal of the hostility with which video art works are viewed.

Finally, the volume ends with a list of distribution sources of artists' videotapes.

*Pat Mollela is a videoartist who teaches at the Corcoran School of Art.*

## Rockefeller Report

The March issue of *RF Illustrated*, published by the Rockefeller Foundation, has an article entitled "An Introduction to Video Art". It was adapted from *Working Paper: Video Art*, by Johanna Gill, who is presently completing her Ph.D. dissertation on video art at Brown University. Single copies of the working paper, "a detailed account, artist by artist and city by city, of what is happening in video art in the U.S. and Canada," are available free from The Rockefeller Foundation, 1133 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036.

## Media Media

*The Animator* is published quarterly by The Northwest Film Study Center, 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205. In addition to news about film activities in the Northwest, the Spring '76 issue contains a calendar of video and film screenings, and a guide to film and video distributors. It also lists festivals, seminars, competitions, and other sources of information. Subscriptions are \$2.00 per year for individuals, \$4.00 for institutions.

*Journal of the Centre for Advanced Television Studies*, Volume 3, number 2 (1975), is about communications policy, access and community TV, independent production, and women's video. Includes articles about access in Britain and Australia, as well as "Agenda Setting" by Dallas Smythe of Simon Fraser University, and "Women's Media U.S.A." by TeleVISIONS Networker Susan Milano. Includes 6 pages of reviews, listings, and abstracts of current books and periodicals, primarily British. Single copies are £1.25, from: CATS, 42 Theobald's Road, London WC1X 8NW England.

*The Tin Kazoo: Television, Politics, and the News* by Edwin Diamond. Cambridge, MIT Press, 1975. 269 pp., cloth, \$9.95.

Diamond is a print journalist and broadcast commentator who co-directs the News Study Group at MIT. In this book, with an analysis of the history of presidential (especially Nixon's) use of TV, he argues that television is less powerful than most people believe.

## ENG workbooks

The Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers has collected all the papers on electronic newsgathering presented at its Detroit meeting last January into a single book titled *Television Newsgathering* (\$12.50). Included are two chapters on ENG as used by stations in Atlanta and Cleveland, seven on equipment (four on the new cameras, and one each on other hardware — antennas, microwave, etc.), one on editing, another on the balance between videotape and film in news reporting, and from Canada, one on the use of satellites. Also included is a complete transcript of the session on ENG at the meeting.

*People's Computer Company* is an organization and a publication that focuses on recreational and educational uses of computers. PCC is published six times a year for \$5. From PCC, PO Box 310, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

The National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting has announced that their long-awaited directory of media and public interest organizations will be printed in August. Among the categories are cable service, cable advocates, media service, media advocates, video instruction, community radio stations, alternative news services, university communication departments, and public interest groups. For further information or to order a copy write: NCCB, 1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. Suite 415, Washington, D.C. 20036.

ENG Field Production Handbook: *Guide to Using Mini Video Equipment* (\$9.95). Includes chapters on systems in use, what "all electronic" signifies, how to handle the equipment (cameras, VTRs), editing, TBCs, microwave links, audio and intercom, and a look into the future. Available from Broadcast Management/Engineering, New York City.

*Culture and Politics: Notes from a Conference* is a publication of the Political Economy Program Center of the Institute for Policy Studies (1901 Que St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20009) reporting a unique gathering of Marxist cultural theorists, creative workers, and radical activists who met in October, 1974. Conference was highly stimulating. Pamphlet is available for \$1.25.

## 'Information' Economics

The National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded a \$133,000 grant to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Office of Telecommunications (OT) to study the economic implications of "information" goods and services.

After the information sector is properly defined, the project calls for the construction of an input-output matrix to explore the structure of the information sector.

With such a tool, policymakers should be able to determine the effect a change in telecommunication investment patterns will have on Gross National Product; the inflationary or deflationary trend of the information sector; how the need for workers in information activities will alter different rates of economic growth.

## Film and Video

The final issue of *The Bulletin for Film and Video Resources* will be published in June 1976. This issue will be a 20-30 page booklet, containing new listings as well as updated information from past issues. It will include lists of production organizations, workshops, distribution outlets, cooperatives, showcases, and print resources for independent film and video producers. Single copies will be available for \$2.00 from Anthology Film Archives, 80 Wooster St., New York, NY 10012, (212) 226-0100.

July 12-17: Western Massachusetts (Mt. Hermon Campus of Northfield Mt. Hermon School). 2nd Mass. Bureau of Library Extension Video Institute. Contact: John LeBaron, Coordinator, Non-print Media Unit, Mass. Dept. of Education, Bureau of Library Extension, 648 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02215 (617) 267-9400, ext. 71.

July 19-30: Advanced documentary workshop by Sanford Rockowitz. Portable Channel, 8 Prince St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607 (716) 244-1259. Fee: \$150. Intensive, individualized. Other summer workshops include: Video Production and Editing; Video and the Personal Space; and Media Studies.

July 19-30: Mass Media Medusa II at the University of Denver's Mass Communications Department. "Women as they appear in American mass media and popular culture" is the topic. Cathy Grieve, Dept. of Mass Comm., U. of Denver, CO 80210 (303) 753-2166.

July 21-24: American Library Associa-

## NEA Revamps Public Media Grants Process

*Chloe Aaron leaves to become PBS VP*

The departure of Chloe Aaron, director of the Public Media Program at the National Endowment for the Arts, to take the job of V-P for Programming at PBS leaves a large question mark about the program's future, especially in view of the major changes in the panel structure which have been effected during Aaron's last year heading the government foundation program.

The Public Media Program of the National Endowment for the Arts has reorganized its panel structure and procedures for fiscal year 1977 into four separate panel groupings which select grants independently from one another. In the past the entire Public Media Panel voted on each grant, with recommendations coming from committees.

The new panels are organized along the four categories of grants given in public media: Media Studies, Regional Development, Programming in the Arts, and General Programs.

The director of Public Media is Chloe Aaron. Principal staff members in the four subdivisions listed above are, respectively, Kathy Kline, Don Druker, George Gelles, and Perrin Hurst.

Panel members in FY 1977 for Media Studies are: Erik Barnouw, historian; Henry Breitrose, program head of Stanford's Film and Broadcasting Department; and Stan Vanderbeek, video artist, filmmaker at University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Regional Development: Gerald O'Grady, Media Study, Buffalo, NY; Sally Dixon, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Ed Emshwiller, filmmaker, NY; Camille Cook, film center, Art Institute of Chicago; Bob Litton, Director of Northwest Film Studies Center, Portland, Ore.; Rick George, South Carolina Arts Commission.

Programming in the Arts: Lonne Elder III, screenwriter, author, TV writer; Allan Miller, president, Music Project for Television; George Schaefer, producer, director; William Stork, V-P Special programs, NBC-TV; Sanford Wolff, Executive Secretary, American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

General Programs: Carl Foreman, screenwriter, director, producer; Richard Jencks, V-P, CBS Television; Richard Leacock, filmmaker, head of MIT Film

Section; Kathleen Nolan, President, Screen Actors Guild; Gordon Parks, author, photographer, screenwriter, director; Arthur Penn, director; Daniel Tarash, screenwriter; John Whitney, Sr., independent filmmaker.

Planning Panel: Colin Young, director, National Film School, England; Paul Roth, Chairman, National Assoc. of Theatre Owners; Richard Leacock, Chairman.

In addition, a new "planning panel" has been created that will include a representative from each of the four panels, as well as several other members. The selection has not been completed, nor has this panel ever met. The functions will be significant, however, involving major policy directions of the program, development of changes in emphasis and guidelines. The role of this group may be enhanced by Aaron's departure and the selection of a new program director. Panel members already designated include Colin Young, director of the British National Film School and an ad hoc member of the General Programs Panel who advises NEA on its role in funding the American Film Institute; Ricky Leacock of MIT, who will serve as the Planning Panel's Chairman, as well as being a full member of the General Programs Panel; and Paul Roth, who is president of the Roth Theatre Circuit, and Chairman of the National Association of Theatre Owners.

In addition, new guidelines have been issued which change some of the provisions of grants. Programming in the Arts will now only accept proposals for pilots or actual series programming. Individual programs are now under the General Program category. The Regional Development guidelines allow grant requests up to \$50,000 this year, up from \$30,000 in the past. In addition, greater flexibility in equipment purchase is allowed.

The Media Studies deadline was May 15. Regional Development has an Aug. 1 deadline. Programming in the Arts has a Sept. 15 deadline. General Programs applications can be submitted at the time of any deadline.

For copies of the guidelines or further details, write Public Media Program, National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C. 20506.

## CALENDAR

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July 21-24: American Library Associa-

tion Centennial Conference in Chicago, with VCCS (Video/Cable Communication Section) programs. Roberto Esteves, CVRP, SFPL, Civic Center, SF 94102 (415) 558-5034.

July 26 - August 6: Advanced Video at Visual Studies Workshop, by David Cort and Davidson Gigliotti. Through Goddard College. Visual Studies Workshop, 4 Elton St., Rochester, NY 14607.

August 2-4, 13-15, 20-22: Fourth annual Northwest Film & Video Festival, sponsored by the Northwest Film Study Center, Caroline Berg Swann Auditorium, Portland Art Museum, S.W. Park and Madison, Portland, Oregon 97205.

August 2: Deadline Woodstock Video Exposition '76. Features ongoing video gallery, evening events; forum on electronic media. Send tapes and description to Woodstock Community Video, Box 519, Woodstock, NY 12498.

August 16-26: Joanne Kelly is teaching a dance and video workshop at 442 Shotwell St. in San Francisco. \$100 fee.

August 28 - September 4: Robert Flaherty Film Seminar, contact Barbara M. Van Dyke, International Film Seminars, Inc. 1860 Broadway, Room 1108, NY, NY 10023.

August 18-24: The World Science Communications Congress — Sci/Com '76 — will focus on "the effective use of film and television in science communications," and will attract delegates from two dozen nations. At Drexel University in Philadelphia, the event is the first international conference of its kind held in the U.S. The sponsor is the American Science Film Association, an affiliate of the International Scientific Film Society. For details, lists of films, videotapes and panels, write: Sci/Com '76, University City Science Center, 3624 Market Street, Phila., PA 19104. Cost: \$50/members, \$65/non-members.

November 21-23: ACT's sixth national symposium will explore "The Child as Consumer" in a three-day series of

## Video Funding In New Orleans

By ANDREW KOLKER

The New Orleans Video Access Center (NOVAC) is attempting to raise funds using a variety of means for a variety of projects aimed at meeting the communications needs of the New Orleans poverty community.

Proposals have been submitted to the City of New Orleans for Community Development Funds, and to the Office of Education for Consumer Education monies.

Neither proposal has a great likelihood of being funded, however. This is due, in part, to NOVAC's oversights:

- Not investigating the funding source, i.e., what has been funded in the past, what the restrictions are, what the budgetary ceiling for individual grants is;
- Requesting money to purchase equipment which should, in fact, be a service provided by the grantee.

Federal support has helped NOVAC stay in business, however. VISTA has been the mainstay of the NOVAC program since its inception (1972), providing \$52 per week to each volunteer, plus an accrued stipend (collectable at the end of one year) of \$50/month, plus medical expenses.

It's a long, tricky process, balancing out various matching funds. Given the average life of a community video access center or video project, funding might conceivably come through for a non-existent organization. But by juggling organization, funding, and community support, NOVAC has scraped by.

*Andrew Kolker works with the New Orleans Video Access Center.*

## TV/Media Grantees

\$5000 from the San Francisco Foundation to California Council for the Humanities, San Francisco, Ca. 1/8/76. For experiment by KPIX Television in attempt to involve commercial television in more public programming.

\$18,960 from San Francisco Foundation to Public Media Center, San Francisco 1/8/76. To help local groups gain greater accessibility to the media.

\$50,000 from Rockefeller Brothers Fund to Academy for Educational Development, NYC, 12/2/75. Toward startup costs for parent information program to make use of public service radio time to educate parents about issues that affect them and their children in NYC public schools.

\$19,000 from Sloan Foundation to Education Development Center, Newton, Ma. 11/10/75. 21/2 yr grant. For production of demonstration modules combining film, videotape, and printed materials used for continuing education of school administrators.

\$54,000 from LSCA (Library Services Construction Act) to CVRP (California Video Resource Project) San Francisco Public Library. To support "Patch Panel," video newsletter, and statewide video-cable consultancy.

panels, video presentations, and workshops in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The conference, in cooperation with the Harvard Graduate School of Education, will include topics such as television as a tool for consumer education, and the effectiveness of governmental regulation to protect the child consumer.

Contact ACT, 46 Austin Street, Newtonville, Mass. 02160, for further information.

*This fall: the Morris County Arts Council will offer a fourteen-week workshop in video basics. Visiting artists will be invited to show their tapes and discuss problems of technique and distribution with the class. Teachers who enroll will receive three in-service credits on completion of the course and, should interest be great enough, an option to take an advanced course during the winter of '77. Anyone interested in this project, either as participant or visiting artist, should contact John Downey, 284 Malapardis Rd., Morris Plains, N.J. 07950.*

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